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At Tenacity Jack's. BY MARION HILL

The Black Cat

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7 Fascinating Short Stories

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THE romantic element in the East Indian tales of Michael White has made this author popular among lovers of short stories. The March issue of The Black Cat will contain a story written by him. The scene is laid in India, Mr. White's native country. He comes of a distinguished Anglo-Indian family. His grandfather, the late Lieutenant-general Sir Michael White, K. C. B., and the latter's six sons all saw active service in India as cavalry officers. Mr. White, being the last of the family, is the possessor of their decorations and medals. Mr. White was educated at Westward Ho College where he was a classmate of Rudyard Kipling.

Other stories equally interesting, but all different, will also be published in The Black Cat for March. Among them is an amusing one suggested by an unusual incident in a hospital in Indianapolis. A young man went there to have a hand removed. A few hours after the operation his brother telephoned to ask just how the hand should be buried in order that the patient might never suffer with pains in it. He was told that it would make no difference. The brother was persistent, so, to ease his mind, he was informed that there was an old superstition that if an amputated hand were buried with the fingers perfectly straight, there would be no further suffering on the part of the patient. This little event was the nucleus around which was woven the story, "Barney's Troublesome Foot," by Jessie Nay-Wagoner.

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A Monthly Magazine of Original Short Stories.

Published at Salem, Mass.

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Vol. XVIII., No. 5. Whole No., 209. FEBRUARY, 1913. 10 cents a copy $1.00 a year

Entered at the Post-Office at Salem, Mass., as second-class matter.

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At Tenacity Jack's.*

BY MARION HILL.

SOME get used to it, which speaks well for the place; and some go mad,—so what *they* say don't count.

Me, I've always got along first rate on the Mojave desert. It's the only spot wide enough for me to wring out my socks in without fear of sprinkling a neighbor. It irritates me to live close.

Tourists may hop in, but they're dead sure to hop out again. They go home and write the place up; call it Death Valley Desert, which it isn't. Death Valley's just around the corner, though. But tourists who wander round in *it*, never get home to write it up. They're there yet.

This is old "Muhavvy"; and bad enough. The Santa Fé trail used to cut through it; and the new Santa Fé choo-choo company has the sense to keep its tracks pretty near to the original cattle path,—for it's not much more.

You can follow the trail with your eye through three states, pretty near, if your sight's good, for there's no tree to get in the way.

This is no location for men who need trees. Once you grow used to getting along without them, they have an awful impudent look, when you *do* bump into one. Seems 's if they had no business busting out of the sand and cutting into the sky. And they don't

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seem to be any manner of use; for the sun burns down through them, like they weren't there at all. If you want shade you have to blast for it, crawl in, and then not expect it around till night.

And *I* don't bullyrag about the sage-brush, either. It's a peaceable enough shrub except where it covers up a rattler. It's easy on the eye, too; gray and comforting as pipe-smoke.

But I can guess where Loma Mariposa wouldn't suit a visitor.

Yes; the siding's called just so,—Loma Mariposa. That's how it squares up, some, with facts.

It's nothing *but* a siding. The trains stop for water. That's all. There's no station; not even a plank for travelers to light on; but as they don't come, there's one plank saved, and wood's scarce.

What I was doing at the track, I don't know, and it doesn't tote up in the sum. But I was there watching the Santa Fé westbound flyer crawl on towards us,—Jim Burrell was loafing with me, and Snoopy McFadden, and one or two others. The "flyers" have to kill considerable time while on the desert stretch. I've seen some engineers pull up, mid stations, and run out of their cabs to chase rabbits. That's true as you're born. And so long as the mucky-mucks at Albuquerque don't know it, where's the harm?

Well, that flyer mosied in, snaffled up all the water it wanted and slobbered off again, Frisco way.

And when it left our track clear, you could have crushed us with a grape, for there in the sand, bewildered but plucky, stood a girl, a shiny new grip, cheap, in each gloved little hand. She wasn't a skirt, mind you, but an unmistakable lady, and the cheapness of the brand new grips only bolstered up her ladiness, or whatever you call it, for they were as plain as could be bought. When a cheap thing tries to look expensive, that's where the curse wriggles in.

"Somebody else is getting it, getting it,
Just where the chicken got the A, X, E,"

hummed Snoopy, nervous like, and he wheeled around and cut off somewhere.

"Me too, to go while the going's good," decided Jim Burrell and the rest.

So they meandered carelessly out of reach.

I knew what was the matter with them for I shivered with it myself. They were *afraid* of her. They knew, as I did, that she was here by some topsy-turvy mistake, in a place where she had no right to be; and couldn't get out till next morning's train.

And somebody had to tell her, had to send the grips tumbling

out of her nerveless hands, and send the frightened pink into her face. The others didn't want to do it. They left it for me.

Why, there wasn't a woman within miles, not a solitary one. The section house *had* been run by a woman but she couldn't cook and they had canned her. And now a chink was cooking fine, and raising the character of the house, too.

No, not a woman in all Loma Mariposa. For of course Carmelita couldn't be reckoned with. And Carmelita never stayed. She was at Flynn Kendrick's right now, and their drunk was due to be over within mighty short order: the yells were slackening constant. Then Carmelita would flit. She never hung round an empty jug. Carmelita couldn't as much as be *spoken* of in front of this pretty cheeked little lady with the grips, the gloves, and the veil tied trim over her small nose. I hadn't ever seen a veil in Loma Mariposa before.

But, shucks, it was just cowardice to stave things off by pretending to ruminate, sort of, on a veil.

I walked across the track and took off my hat. It 'most stuck to my forehead,—hadn't doffed it in a coon's age and had lost the hang.

"Good morning, miss," I said. Which it wasn't. It was afternoon, late. Her bright face made me slip up. I got it right, next, "Good afternoon, miss."

"Good afternoon," she answered, quick and clear and heart-bustingly cheerful. She looked around at the shacks, puzzled-like. "This *is* Loma Mariposa, isn't it?"

No use me denying anything so easy proved. When I start in to deny, I pick on something safe.

"Oh, yes," I said, following her eye around and seeing things all worse than I'd ever seen them before. "Lucky it doesn't know it's Loma Mariposa, but it is."

"I thought the name meant 'place of butterflies,' so I made up my mind there *were* butterflies, and of course flowers."

But she didn't grow grouchy because nothing was as nice as she had hoped. She was the kind to cheer up on mosquitoes if butterflies failed, and trim a house *pretty* with sawdust when roses petered out. In my mind I bet on her, then and there, that though she would *think* a man an angel before she married him, she wouldn't go back on him when he proved just man, but would make him happy, and be happy herself; likely would be gladder than ever thinking that he, wingless, couldn't possibly moult in the house. Queer, but this girl made you think of marrying right away.

"It's the mountain that's the butterfly," I said.

"Mountain?" she echoed, smiling.

Yes, it was pretty flat; but 'way up against the horizon were the hills of the Topaz Range; and two of them grew together with a join in the middle. The Topaz Range is strong on color; and when the lights were just right that double mountain looked like a giant butterfly.

I showed it to her.

"Yes, I see," she agreed finally, after gazing like hell. She wasn't the sort of a girl to fail to see something pretty for want of a hard search. "Uncle never told me it was the mountain."

Uncle? Now who was uncle? She let it in on me like hot lead.

"He never really encouraged me to come," she explained, honestly. "Though he said it would be nice to have me,—that he missed my johnnybread and popovers and elderberry pies."

Gee, I hadn't heard of elderberry pies since I left Pennsylvania, and my mouth watered. But she'd have to make elderberry pies out of stewed garnets, this side of the world.

"And when I lost my school," she continued, saddening a bit, "I hadn't a soul to turn to but Uncle Flynn. So I put all my money into a ticket here, and here I am,—to surprise him. Do you know Uncle Flynn? I'm Nelly Kendrick. He's Flynn Kendrick."

Know Flynn Kendrick? Why, Great Glittering Orion, didn't I *hear* him that very minute?

Also Carmelita.

"Miss," I said firmly, "your uncle ain't here."

"Not here?" she asked, paling a mite, but game. "Truly?"

"Truly," I said, firmer yet. He was out of his head: if that isn't "not here" I'd like to know what is.

"When'll he be back?" she asked faintly.

"Miss, I don't know." Nor I didn't.

She didn't *drop* her grips, but she lowered them carefully to the scorching sand and let them burrow there while she thought out the situation.

"But he'll be back sometime?" she finally asked.

That's where I answered like a fool, coming out with the literal truth.

"*Oh*, yes!" I said. I chipped it off spry as an idiot.

"Then that's all right," she said, bracing up again, and lifting her grips. "For I can stay at his house. I won't be afraid by myself. Will you please take me there?"

"On the jump," I promised, never stirring a leg. I thought like

mad. Was there any shack empty? Then I remembered Tenacity Jack's. He'd left that morning for Aqua Caliente to referee a prize fight,—a three day tournament.

"Come on, miss," I said, letting out ten breaths in one. I politely persuaded my two hands into the grip handles where hers already were, and at the brief touch she let go same as if I'd burned her. And she blushed a little; but thanked me lovely. She wasn't touchy; but she couldn't be touched. My soul flopped down on its knees before her.

She talked very prettily as we toddled along, and kept up her spirits bravely, considering the impression the "houses" were making on her.

They weren't more than corncribs. You'd apologize to a prize hog for covering him with one. You see, wood's mighty precious. We can't ever build a new house till an old one blows down and gives us the material.

This girl never croaked a croak. But I could see she was wondering how a woman could possibly live in such tumble-down-dicks of huts; for her next shy question was,

"May I ask if you are married?"

"Yes, I am," I said dismally. I hadn't remembered it for centuries. My wife had forgotten it longer ago still; so what was the use *my* remembering?

"Oh, will you ask her to come to see me? *beg* her?" implored Nelly Kendrick. But I hated to put Flynn's name to hers, or hers to Flynn's. There were sudden tears in her voice, showing how mighty lonesome she was for a woman's company.

"Miss," I said, keeping my eye steady on the great stone butterfly, "we men who are here wouldn't *be* here if we had a good wife somewhere. I don't know *where* mine is."

"Oh, I beg your pardon," she said gently.

Now that twisted my throat into a knot and burned a fear of tears into my dry eyes. You see, nobody had been sorry for me for so many years that I'd forgotten how soft it could sound.

"There isn't a woman in all Loma Mariposa," I said, owning the truth sooner instead of later.

The blow 'most knocked her out, as I knew it must. But she stayed plucky. She took her own medicine with grit.

"I've done a foolish, foolhardy thing," she acknowledged, pressing her velvety young lips tight. When she mastered their trembling, she spoke again, sort of explaining. "But I had nowhere else to go. All my life I've never had a home, but have taught school in

the winter and boarded in the district all summer. That has used up my savings."

"Miss," I said, glad of a chance to cut short her trouble, "here we are at Ten— Be careful, you three-ply fool, you! I mean myself, miss. Here we are. This is the house."

"Suppose uncle's got the key with him!" she worried.

Also she looked around her, kind of desperate for the moment, to see if all the shacks sized up no better. And they didn't. Each one was like the rest. This one of Tenacity Jack's was a bit cleaner, to tell the truth, but so little you couldn't see it. Ten or twelve of them made up the whole town. And of course there weren't fences between, or anything like that. You picked out your own house mostly by the color of the wash that flopped from the clothes line.

Squinting around, I recognized, far off, my own red underwear; next to it, Burrell's blue jeans; this way, Snoopy's reckless output of five striped socks—Snoopy always hung out uneven socks in fives, sevens or nines, but he had only two feet like the rest of us—Tenacity had a full line of red-and-white spotted wipes and one dish towel; over yonder there flapped Flynn Kendrick's display of one yellow sock and one black one, curled up as in life, not washed at all, but only hung out, jovial-like, same as flags. And the houses didn't stand up happy, but toppled some, the wind was so strong.

"Key?" I said, remembering to speak. "Oh, I have the key." And I hove up my foot and kicked the door open. What use would a key be? You could gouge your way into any of the houses with a sore thumb. "Come right in, Miss Nelly, and make yourself at home."

She did it, too. But the heat rushed out of that shut-up house worse than a furnace, and a smell of stale food like from a camp fire's ashes into which a bone has dropped. So I hoisted the windows and propped them open with bottles, making it look more natural and comfortable.

Nelly Kendrick slowly took off her hat and coat and fixings, and put them down on the cot bed. For we were in the parlor. The only other room was the kitchen.

I wandered in there and propped up those windows, too. She came close after me, as though for companionship. I just hated for her to see the bare messiness of the place. But queer enough, it cheered her.

"Well, there's a need for me *here*," she chirped. "I see that!"

I wondered how Tenacity Jack would stand for the remark, but of course he couldn't say anything.

"There's no real reason for this being the hole it is," she went on. "Tear those rags from the windows, put up sash curtains, polish that stove, cover the table with a clean cloth, scrub this filthy floor, and this room's as sweet as could be." She got enthusiastic. "I brought along a little cross-bar muslin for a dress, but I'm going to cut it up for curtains before I cook a bite. Though goodness knows I'm hungry."

Well, if she was going to tear down Tenacity's cherished rags, that was up to him to fuss, not me. As for food,—

"Help yourself," I said, pointing out his cache.

She stepped curiously to the wall to look at a medal pinned there. It was a bronze star. On it was,

John St. John.
One mile dash.

St. John was Tenacity Jack's hind name.

Nelly Kendrick turned "uncle's" medal over without removing it from the wall, saw nothing explanatory on the back, and let it drop to place again, naturally not understanding.

Then I realized that the place was plumb hung with oddities, none of them like Flynn, and that she might undertake to question me about them. So I took my leave.

"Miss Nelly," I said, hopping out of the back door, sudden like, "don't think I've deserted you, for I haven't. But you need some time to yourself, and you'll want to rest and eat. I'll come back later on in the evening and see how you fare and chat it over with you. I'll even bring my blanket and sleep outside the door if you feel nervous, though you're as safe here as in jail."

"And much free-er," she said, laughing. "Thank you. But I'm not afraid. Don't worry about me. I'm all right at last. Good-by for a while."

I walked off to find Burrell and swear it out with him. Poor girl. "All right at last!" So far as I could see there wasn't any "right" for her at either end of the line, for she couldn't stay where she was, and was as bad off where she came from.

I couldn't find Burrell. He's the kind that's always underfoot when you don't want him, and hiding out when you do. So I sort of slid into the section house on chances. The boys were playing auction rummy. That settled it. I sat down and took a hand and forgot Nelly Kendrick same as if she'd never lived.

Auction rummy is the best yet. It's a card game that takes not only science and luck but pluck as well. There's mighty few games of cards that call for pluck. But auction rummy does; and it

fascinates me. The pluck comes in having the nerve to break up a good certainty in your hand for a chance that's better. Me, I can sit at auction rummy from seven to twelve and from twelve to the next seven.

So I can't say exactly how long it was or how short, but the lights were lit when I came to during a shuffle and heard the Mexican say, glancing out of the door,

"Somebody, he jump offa de hand-car."

"Who that?" asked the chink.

The Mexican obligingly peered through the dusk at the man who had tumbled off.

"That Tenacity Jack," he remarked.

"*Good* night!" I said, and raised right up, throwing down the hand dealt me without looking at it,—which shows my state of mind.

"Bit?" asked the Mexican, startled. A rattler was all he was ever afraid of; and he knew of nothing else that would move me from rummy.

"No. I left something valuable at Tenacity Jack's and I'll have to go get it."

So I ran, and lively too.

Jack had a head start, but I kept a close second. He would have heard me if he hadn't been whistling his lungs loose. And it was too dusky for him to notice me sprinting behind.

We both struck the shack at about the same time, but he, still ignorant of me, clipped round to the kitchen door, being doubtless keen for grub. I started up the front step, for there was Nelly Kendrick in the parlor just trying to light a lamp. Her back was to me, so *she* didn't see me either. She got the lamp to burn. I noticed how extra pretty she looked by lamplight. She was slighter, also, than I had thought,—not much thicker than a squirt of vichi.

Tenacity Jack hit the kitchen with a thud.

She jerked, but steadied quite happily.

"That you, uncle?" she sang out.

"Now, go nix on that, go nix on that, Dentalia Pearls; and *clear out,*" sang Jack back.

I had to sit down on the step to laugh quiet in my own stomach. I just can't tell you how awfully funny "Dentalia Pearls" really was. And the explanation is so long as to cook all the cool quick wit out of it. For Loma Mariposa boasts just one rock, the rest being sand, and on that rock some agile guy from God knows where, had pasted a picture "ad" of a tooth paste. The "ad" was the head

of a gay sort of girl showing all her teeth, and underneath were the words, "Dentalia Pearls."

We made b'lieve, lots, that the girl was our particular friend. And as most of the drunks leaned against that rock for real comfortable slumber, "going to see Dentalia Pearls" grew into another word for any frisky kind of a pipe-dream.

Nelly Kendrick ducked her sleek head to listen, *good*.

"What did you say?" she demanded,—and carried the lighted lamp into the kitchen.

I limbered out restfully to watch what went on, for I was in the dark, in the privatest sort of a private box to see the show, and they were in the light.

And that *handsome* kitchen hopped suddenly up and hit me dumb, for she'd done every last thing she said she'd do, and the result was some wonder.

She put the lamp on the renovated table, and eyed Jack hard.

"You tell me what you are doing *here*," she ordered finally.

"Well, I like that," he ripped out. But he took his hat off. "Isn't the explanation up to you first?"

"I'm where I belong," she said proudly. "And that's more than *you* can say."

Then he caught sight of the ruffly sash-curtains and the other ga-dinks, and started to agree with her. But he's level headed, is Jack, and he poked his head out of the back door and looked into the night. I knew what for. He was hunting his wash. It was all there,—five spotted wipes, one dish towel. The outfit checked up to a dot. So he knew he was home. Naturally he came in, threw his hat on the floor and sat down.

She looked at him very hard again and then began to soften. No woman could take a good look at Tenacity Jack and not soften, I reckon. For he was all-round the lovablest boy I ever knew. A strapping big hulks, he was, but friendlier than a Newfoundland pup. Come day, go day, there was always the hint of a smile somewhere on his face, either in his honest grey eyes, or on his lips, or, blame me, even in his chin, which had a sunny kind of a cleft in it big enough for you to lay your finger in. And square! That boy couldn't even *spell* crooked. The cleanest sport he was who ever went through college. That's why all the toughs wanted him for an umpire. They could trust *him*.

College? Yes, sir. Jack knew his A, B, C's. What he came out here for was to wrestle down some lung flunk or other. And he did it. Why, the hang-on grit of him can't be told. Once let

him set his head on something and he never gave up, just never. And talking of head, his hair was great,—blacker than a crow, and so shinily parted that it looked as if he'd just come up from swimming. Me, if I'd been a girl, and he'd wagged even his little finger at me, I'd come a-running. Nor ever be sorry for it; that's the chief point.

This girl, though, wasn't the kind to come for only *one* wag, I could see that. But she terribly wanted to find some real good reason for letting him stay there; I could see that, too.

"Maybe you're a friend of Mr. Kendrick," she suggested at last.

"Well, not much!" denied Jack heartily. "I'm no friend of *his*."

Mostly forgetful like, he slid his hungry hand across the cloth to one of his own crackers; then slid it empty back.

"You want some food?" she asked sympathetically.

'Starved," he owned up.

"I'm starved myself," she said shortly. "So I know how you feel."

The hospitable side of her chucked a second plate and cup on the table 'fore she knew what she was doing.

"Will you stay and have something to eat?" she invited.

Stay? What had he come for *but* to stay? He looked dazed at his own board, his own dishes, his own eats; and all but split.

"Thank you; maybe I will," he said drily.

She went to the wood-box beside the stove and tugged at one of the manzanita roots to freshen up the fire with it. It's mighty pretty fuel, manzanita is, smooth and red as beets; but it's kinky, and one root hugs another; so she had several tugs coming.

"Allow me," cried Jack, hopping up to the job.

They sure made a nice picture, she lifting the lid from the glowing fire, he packing manzanita in artistically. And each wondering what the hades the other was doing there, but too full of manners to press the asking. It was nuts to *me* all right. And I'd a been glad for some of the fire, moreover. For when the day's heat goes, it goes a-kiting. A drop in temperature of thirty degrees at a clip is nothing at all for dear little Loma Mariposa. But I hated to butt in *yet*.

They had a skittish, uneasy, but tickled-to-death-honeymoon halo a-top of them both as they sat opposite at the table and passed each other the plates. Jack opened his eyes a bit when she knifed into his pet box of sardines—he'd denied me those sardines only a week ago—but he took what she gave him and was thankful.

"You see, I've been fasting since five o'clock this morning," he

explained sociably. "I started off for Aqua Caliente to see a prize fight through, but, a few miles out, I learned that the two men had had a private quarrel on the street and had killed each other. So I came back. The fight was off."

"Oh, isn't that dreadful!" she cried.

"Yes, dreadful:—no fight."

As they chatted away, off and on, I noticed the change that came to them. Both the kind that talked straight from the shoulder, they each soon showed a little halt and stammer. Each grew alively conscious of the other and suffered something delightful.

Mooning out there on my lonesome step, I philosophied a heap. I don't know what about;—I never do know, when I philosophy;—but it left me with a cold, empty pain at my heart;—for myself.

When I looked into the bright kitchen again, Tenacity Jack had come to the end of his reticence, no longer being hungry. He laid down his knife and fork, elbowed his plate aside, folded his arms on the table, and leaned ingratiatingly forward on them, his eyes very soft and dazzling.

"Do you mind telling me who you *are?*" he asked.

I sighed and pulled my belt in a notch; for peace was over.

"Certainly not," she answered, surprised that he hadn't guessed, account of her being where she was. "I'm Nelly Kendrick."

"Anything of Flynn's?" he asked, pained.

"His niece. I came to keep house for him."

He got the situation in a flash,—as she hadn't, yet.

"Oh, I see," he said pityingly. "You found him dead drunk,—and worse,—sized it up for hopeless, as it is, and came here to my place, it being empty. Quite right. Put—!" In his mind, he pieced the tale out further and reddened fierily. "What a cad you must think me for intruding! My word on it, Miss Kendrick, I didn't know!"

It was too much for her to grasp in the lump; she had to pick it up grain by grain.

"Uncle Flynn 'drunk,—and worse'? I 'found' him? Why, he's not here!"

"Begging your pardon, he is. I thought you knew it."

"But he *isn't* here!" gazing from room to room.

"Not in *my* house; of course not."

"Yours? He said it was his!"

"Kendrick said?"

"No."

"Who?"

"A man."

"What name?"

"I don't know."

"What like?"

"It's hard to say. Here, all of you dress the same. But he was kind and very gentlemanly; had a low, soft voice; quietly wistful eyes, blue; and seemed sensitive."

God bless her.

But Tenacity slowly shook his head, not recognizing this for me.

"With wonderfully, well—bright hair," she added.

"Sunrise! *Sunrise* told you this was Kendrick's?"

Then *that* phase of the situation took hold of her and sent the blood flying into her face, and out of it.

She shoved back her chair and stood up, in a tremble. Her eyes sought the escape of the open door, and she glanced out into the night, but was afraid of it, and no wonder. For it was just hopeless miles of black desert, not even star-lit, with a desperate wind cutting gashes across it.

"What am I to do? Oh, what am I to do?" she whispered. "What have I *done?* And what is going to happen to me?"

Quite aghast at this collapse of the little creature whom he had taken to be coolly practical and able to look well out for herself, he studied a bit further, and then grabbed the whole truth,—that she was defenceless, homeless, terrified; the kind that needs a man, like a child, and always *will* need a man.

"Do?" he cried, jumping up himself, and holding out his hand to her,—a hand brown enough on the back, but white within, and strongly, warmly, loyally red-veined. "Why, let me love you, and marry you, and kick the world around for you!"

"How dare you!" she said, shrinking back.

But it was only convention that spoke; her timid eyes held little of anger; and at last she shyly reached for his steady hand. But only as a grateful shake.

"Thank you," she said, half sobbing. Then she dropped his fingers. "It was awfully kind of you. But I see I forced it from you. I didn't mean to."

"Then you will?" he sang.

"NO!" she blazed, drawing back again, but if ever the dawn of love glinted in a girl's furious eyes, it was in hers then.

Tenacity Jack let go for a "no"? Not he.

He bunted the chairs out of the way with his foot, for he felt

the need of space, and then he expanded. He talked such a blue streak I can't put down a tenth of it. It would sure have coaxed the cud from a camel. I never heard such zipp and go in the way of love-making before or since.

"Yes, you forced it from me, you forced it from me, Nelly Kendrick, for I couldn't help myself! Do you think it takes a century to fall in love? How long does 'falling' take? A second! In my heart, I gave myself to you the minute I heard your voice from the other room. I'd been hunting for the sweetness of it all my life. Can't you see that this last half hour has been fairyland for me? I'd woo you for years and wait for you through eternity if need be; but here is a place where the need is for swiftness not delay. Give yourself to me without fear, for as God hears me I love you honestly and dearly. Why do you shrink away from me? You have been very sweet and gentle to me till now. So you cannot hate me. You said you had nowhere to go—"

"And I haven't," she sobbed between her shut teeth.

But I heaved a tremendous sigh out there by my lonely, for I knew by the sound of her voice that he'd met a "tenacity" equal to his own, and that she'd never let herself be thrown into his arms by force of her own need, let her like him never so well. What to do with her till train time to-morrow was still the problem of the hour.

"Then let my home be yours," warbled on Jack, nighting-galing to beat the band. Lord, how his voice sang! Every word touched softer than a kiss. I don't see how she held out against him. "We are both waifs of the world, pilgrims in the west, hunting for life and happiness. Let us give it to each other. I am poor only for want of love. In everything else I am well off and able to care for you as you require. Either we can live here, and make this desert blossom like a garden, or we can go back to the east that we came from. Nelly! Girl! Give yourself!"

"Don't touch me, don't touch me!" she cried, sobbing sure for fright now, and pressed, piteous-like, against the bare wood wall.

Well, I couldn't have her tortured, so I mosied in.

"Good evening," I said, soft and society. Then I introduced them.

"Miss, Tenacity Jack. The rest is on that medal."

He dropped his outstretched arms to his side and drew up like a trooper. And she took her hands from her eyes. At first she had started to run towards me, for protection; but when she saw who it was, she hauled off.

"Why did you tell me a lie?" she flung.

I really winced. For I'm the truthfullest man ever. My guardian angel could loaf on the job year in year out, and find me sweet as a nut when school took in again.

"Because it was cleaner than the truth," I admitted. Then I hedged. "But I didn't lie."

"You did. You said my Uncle Flynn was gone."

"He is," I said seriously. "There's nothing but the beast left. If you went to him now he could put an axe in you and never know it."

"Oh, poor Uncle Flynn!" she moaned, putting her gentle hands over her eyes again.

"*Poor* Uncle Flynn?" I chuckled out one snort. Couldn't help it.

"Why did you say this was his house?" She ripped back to the lies again.

"Miss, I didn't *say* it. I only *walked* it."

"Oh, I know you tried to do for the best," she sighed wearily. She was plumb tired out. She needed sleep and plenty of it. She came close up to me, and very afraid, put her two hands lightly on the handle of my gun in my belt, never daring to draw it, but looking at it yearningly. "If I were a man I could shoot myself and end it."

Queer, how they have to have a house where they feel they *belong*. I couldn't do a thing for her. My brains were racked to a frazzle. Tenacity Jack, he was rags.

Then there was a little sort of hubbub outside and some one walked lightly through the parlor.

I found out afterwards that Snoopy hadn't gone far enough from the station but what he could listen, and bit by bit he'd spread the tale.

I turned to look at the light walker.

It was Carmelita.

She was sober and pale; and the lamplight did for her what it had done for little Nelly, brought out the best. Her blue silk dress didn't show its stains, nor her bead necklace the gaps. She was part dago, but not so you could notice it, except for her black hair and coldly snapping eyes.

"You two men can jump the stockade," she said briefly. "I'll take care of this girl, and good care, if she'll let me, till she finds out what she wants to do."

"Oh, please!" cried Nelly Kendrick, letting go my pistols. She ran to Carmelita and gratefully slipped her hand in hers. Then she remembered some more of those truthful lies, and questioned me

again. "Why did you tell me there was no woman here but myself?"

Carmelita looked at me, a flash of fire, but sad.

I dropped my eyes before hers. *Mine*,—before Carmelita's! Fancy it.

"Vamos! Quit the claim. Light out," suggested Carmelita to us both. "I'll stay here to-night; mothering 's a new trade to me, but I'll find out how."

Little Nelly, looking mighty wisp-like compared with the fullness of the woman whose hand she still gratefully hung to, motioned also to us to go.

"Girl!" cried Tenacity, "don't send me away without a word! What have I done except beg you to be my wife?"

"God!" said Carmelita to her charge. "If a good man offers you his love, his name, take it, you fool, and be everlastingly on your knees to him."

She shook the girl's hand from hers and sat down at the table, shivering. Then she dropped her head in her arms and lay there.

The girl shivered, too, and stared at her silently, guessing some, but *knowing* nothing except that the man wasn't so bad a refuge after all. Her fear of him changed to fear of the shaking woman. She walked timorously to him, touched him softly, then gave herself to him forever in a swift, clinging embrace.

But she broke right away, her face all heaven.

"Good night," she said. "Good night,—Jack. I'll stay here with her. She needs me." She went back to the table and put her arms around Carmelita's shoulders, but her face smiled at Jack. "Come in the morning."

On our way to the section house, Tenacity gamboled loads.

"Isn't life all right?" he asked, slapping me.

"Sure!" I said. But my heart added, "To some."

For there was Flynn, *and* Carmelita, and me.

House of Broken Bones.*

BY F. RONEY WEIR.

HERE it is," announced Si Bently, bringing his horse to a standstill before the old stone house, "but you don't want it."

Fanny MacGregor thrust her pretty peaked face from the carriage, her eyes shining with excited admiration.

"How do you know we don't want the place, Mr. Bently? Why, of course we want it! Just look, Ward, picket fence, broken rose trellis, old orchard, and oh, those stone walls and deep-set windows!"

Ward MacGregor got out of the carriage, and the expression upon his face told the driver that his admiration for the old Payne place equalled if it did not surpass that of his sister's.

"You said, I believe, Mr. Bently, that the price of this place is the same as that of the place you took us to see first."

"Same price but you don't want it."

"Oh, yes, we do, Mr. Bently!" Miss MacGregor could be very imperious upon occasion, and this was one of the occasions. Mr. Bently's insistence upon the advantages of the first house he had taken them to see was getting upon her nerves. "That other house was a shanty! A mere shanty!" she declared loftily, "while this is a dream. Low, brooding, picturesque,—everything that we like but didn't expect to find for the money we had to expend."

"It's your mother that's buying the place, ain't it?"

"Yes, but she has left the selection to me and my sister," answered Ward.

"Well, when she hears the truth about this place she won't have it, depend on that."

"Isn't the land good?"

"Oh yes, the land's all right, but—"

"Oh, joy! I believe he's going to tell us the place is haunted," triumphed Fanny. "Which is it, a white lady or a crying child?"

Si Bently ignored the girl's flippancy.

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"Charlie Payne would be only too glad to work this place off on a widder and a couple of young folks that didn't know any better'n to buy it," he announced gloomily. "It's been for sale for twenty years, and will be for twenty more unless you folks are foolish enough to take it. Why, do you know what folks around here call this house?"

"I don't care what the folks around here call it, I call it beautiful!" declared Fanny.

"They call it the 'House of Broken Bones'!"

"Then it is haunted! Oh, shades of Thomas Hood!" and Fanny quoted:

'For over all there hung a cloud of fear;
A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
And said as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is haunted.'

"Oh, Ward, I feel as if we had driven right into the pages of an eighteenth century novel. For instance: It was late afternoon. The west hung heavy with ominous clouds. Now and then low mutterings of thunder, and far-away flashes of lightning foretold the approaching storm. On a lonely country road, before a mysterious old stone house, stood a carriage. It contained a beautiful—"

"Lap robe," interpolated Ward.

"No, lady—and two evil looking—"

"Oh, hold on, Fanny—it's all right to abuse me but remember Mr. Bently here, is not your brother."

"Well, we are going to buy this place. No ghostly inhabitants shall keep us out. Shall they, Ward?"

"We're goin' to git wet! See them clouds rollin' up? But I can stand it if you can," grumbled Si Bently, "and if you are bound to buy Charlie Payne's house of broken bones, why, it's none of my business. My business is to drive this buggy around the country, and yours is to pick out your house."

"I'm so glad he realizes that at last," whispered Fanny.

"Your sister seems to favor ha'nted houses, and if she likes 'em she's got one right here. Not ha'nted exactly, but it's got bad luck wished on to it, and the wish sticks, let me tell yuh. Now I ain't a mite superstitious—not a mite; I just as leave walk through a graveyard at twelve o'clock at night as to eat peanuts, but I wouldn't live in that there stun house if it was give to me. No sir, I wouldn't, and neither would anyone else around here. Nobody has ever lived in that house for any length of time without havin' broken bones.

"Charlie Payne, who owns the house now and who probably always will own it, unless you folks are foolish enough to buy it—Charlie Payne wouldn't think of even goin' inside of that house, and Charlie Payne is a hard-headed, up-to-date lawyer in Preston. He ain't a mite of superstition in his makeup, no more'n I have, but he wouldn't live in it.

"His father, old Sam Payne, hired a contractor by the name of Jack Leveroi to build the house twenty year ago. Sam Payne was pretty well off, an' he wanted a house different from any of his neighbors and he sure got it. And it is a well-built house, there's no denyin' that. The woodwork inside is all polished oak, and the stone was quarried right in the neighborhood, and there's a fireplace and all sech fixin's.

"But old Sam Payne was a skinflint, hard as a nut to deal with, and he and Leveroi got into some sort of a jangle and had a lawsuit. Leveroi swore he wouldn't finish the house, and old Sam Payne said he would make him finish it, and he did, too.

"Jack Leveroi was obliged to finish the place, but the day he took his toolbox out he said to old Sam Payne, 'I've finished your house, but I've built a curse into it, a curse of broken bones.' That's all he said before he shouldered his chisels and saws, and lit out for parts unknown.

"Nobody ever saw Jack Leveroi around this neighborhood again, but his curse stuck, and in less than a week after the Paynes moved in old Sam broke his neck. Then Charlie broke his leg, and when the hired girl broke her collar-bone old Miss' Payne went crazy over the matter and moved out and Charlie Payne ain't never stepped foot in the house since. He don't want his back broke, and he'd get it if ever he stepped in there."

"I'd much rather it had been a white lady or a crying child," sighed Miss MacGregor.

"Yes, they wouldn't be half as damagin'," Si Bently conceded, "but folks usually has to take such ha'nts as is sent 'em; they can't pick and choose. But they needn't jump in and buy 'em. After the Paynes moved out they rented to five different families, and every last family had trouble, and then they couldn't rent and they couldn't sell, and it's been nigh onto eighteen year since anybody's lived there. Charlie Payne has sold the land off in lumps until there is only ten acres left. He told in my hearin' that if he don't sell the house this year he's goin' to tear it down. But you needn't tell him I said so."

"We won't say a word, Mr. Bently, and it is nice of you to warn

us, but I am very glad we happened along before the house was demolished, because I believe it is the very place we want. There seems to be a barn at the back; you had better drive your horses under cover, and we will seek shelter in the house if we can get in."

But Si Bently preferred taking his chances in the carriage. "I'll turn their heads to the east, and set in the buggy if it's all the same to you. I ain't got any money for doctor's bills. I ain't superstitious—not a mite—but I don't care to monkey around that house."

A swirl of dust swept up the road ahead of the rain and a peal of sharp thunder rattled immediately overhead. The MacGregors ran up the overgrown path, and reached the wide front porch just as the first deluge of wind-driven rain curtained the front gate, Si Bently, and the carriage, from sight.

Ward tried the front door, and found to his astonishment that it was unlocked. They entered the hall.

"Perfectly safe to leave the house unlocked," laughed Ward. "A superstition like that is better than a standing army to keep marauding boys and tramps away."

Fanny found herself clinging to her brother's arm. The hall was very dark, and the storm without cast livid green reflections through the small-paned windows. The thunder rattled constantly now, and the lightning seemed to fairly crackle through the empty rooms.

"Now is the time to fire off that haunted house poem of yours, Fanny." Ward was peering about with Fanny still clinging to him. "What is it?"

'For over all there hung a cloud of—'

"Oh, don't, Ward, please! I never realized before what a difference it makes where you repeat ghostly tales. It is rather strange that so many horrid things have happened in this house, isn't it, Ward?"

"But of course, like Mr. Bently, you 'ain't got a mite of superstition—not a mite'!" jibed Ward. "Ghostly poems recited under bright sunlight at a garden sociable for instance, are never effective. But here—

'For over all there hung a cloud of dust;
Deserted twenty years or even thirty,
Admire it as we will, concede we must
The place is dirty.'

His sister giggled hysterically, her giggle ending in a frightened little squeal at a simultaneous flash of lightning and bang of thunder.

"Let's go and take a look at the upper rooms," suggested Ward. "Might as well as to stand cowering in the hall here. You won't mind the storm so much if you have something else to think of."

"No, no, I never will go up those stairs, and I sha'n't let you go Ward."

"Oh, you better go out and sit with old Si Bently in the rain," suggested Ward. "Perhaps you can comfort each other. You can tell each other about the ghosts your grandmothers saw, and talk about banshees. Come on up or else go out with Si."

Ward started lightly up the stairs, laughing down at his distressed sister below. At that moment a terrific crash of thunder shook the old house to its foundation, and the lightning, vivid and terrible, etched the boy's figure against the oaken casing with startling distinctness.

Fanny saw him stumble forward, then reel and fall, huddling at her feet on the floor of the hall, a heavy, inert, unconscious body.

She threw open the front door and screamed with all her might, then dropped upon the floor and gathered him in her arms.

"What's to pay?" roared the terrified voice of Si Bently from the veranda steps where he had prudently halted.

"Oh, come and help me! Ward is killed! Oh hurry, hurry!"

"Eh-h-h-ha! I told you so!"

"Never mind what you told me. Come and help me lift him!"

But Si Bently still lingered by the veranda steps without offering to ascend.

Fanny uttered a fervent ejaculation of thanksgiving as Ward opened his eyes, grinned at her, and presently sat up with a hand at a purplish welt over his right eye.

In a whirlwind of tearful emotion Fanny attempted to take his hand.

"Don't Fanny," he begged weakly, "the wrist is broken."

"Oh, dear Ward! Let us get out of this horrible house! Let us get back to Preston and to a doctor as soon as we can. Oh, your poor wrist!"

"Yes, and what's the matter with my poor eye? I'll be a pretty looking guy going into town after my call at the House of Broken Bones, won't I? I feel as if I had been run through a corn shredder!"

"I told you! Eh-h-h-ha! I told you!" came a stentorian croak from the front steps.

"Be still Fanny, don't cry any more. I feel better. Honestly, it doesn't pain so very much. That will come later when the bones

are knitting. Mr. Bently, have you a match?" Ward finished.

Ward had seated himself upon the bottom step of the stairs, and was visible to the dripping driver from the latter's vantage point of safety outside. "If you have I'm afraid it's water soaked. Go bring it, Fanny. I am rather shaky on my pins."

Fanny brought Si Bently's box of matches to her brother. "You are not going up those stairs again, Ward MacGregor!"

"Only part way Fanny."

He lighted match after match, bending to scrutinize every step, tread and riser.

"What are you hunting for, Ward?" demanded his sister.

"For the thing which threw me," he replied, extinguishing his last match, and coming down to his sister. "Now for Preston and a doctor to get my wrist set and a patch on my head, then to a lawyer."

"It won't do you any good to sue Charlie Payne," warned Si Bently.

Ward only smiled at Bently. "Shut the door Fanny, and shut it tight. We don't want the storm to beat in and spoil our oaken floors, for we are going to buy that house."

"Oh, Ward!" exclaimed Fanny, and "Great snakes, such pig-headedness!" remarked Si Bently.

On the way back to town Ward elicited the information that all the accidents in the House of Broken Bones had happened either in the front hall or on the small flight of narrow back stairs.

In spite of his broken bones Ward MacGregor laughed. "Such a simple ghost" he said, "to haunt a poor old house for twenty years. Mr. Bently, will you kindly drive to Mr. Payne's residence and ask him to step down to the hotel where a young fellow with broken bones will buy his place for the price named?"

Bently did as requested, and Mr. Payne, who seemed eager to sell, appeared just as the doctor was leaving. Ward, his arm in a sling, and a patch over his eye, received his visitor and made known his desire to purchase the stone house.

"You are still willing to sell it at that price?" he asked Mr. Payne.

"I've set that price upon it and I will stand by my offer."

"It is a ridiculously small sum of money for such a house. Why do you part with it at that figure?"

"That is my business."

"It is not because of the unfortunate accidents which have occurred in the house?"

"Not at all, I assure you."

"Nor because of the superstitious fear attaching to them?"

"Of course that has made the sale difficult."

"I think it is only fair to tell you before the papers are made out, Mr. Payne, that I have discovered the reason for the accidents; a very simple, easily explained reason."

Mr. Payne's rather heavy face took on a look of incredulous interest.

"Whoever built the house, either intentionally or otherwise, made a difference of one inch in the width of a riser in the stairs, about half way up, just above the point lighted by the windows in the lower hall. A person unconsciously accommodates his feet to the height of the step while he is still near the bottom. This uneven step is placed at exactly the right height to fool one either going up or coming down the stairs. I caught it going up, but I should imagine the consequences would be even more disastrous to one coming down. I presume the back stairs are built in the same manner, although I didn't have the chance to investigate them."

An intense anger purpled Mr. Payne's face, and he vindictively muttered the one word, "Leveroi."

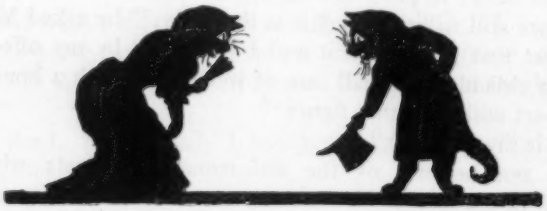
"Are you still willing to sell the house at the price mentioned?"

"Oh, certainly," he answered sullenly, "I shall be glad to be rid of it."

And Ward smiled contentedly, remembering the rose-lattice, the broad veranda, and the old apple orchard which had so delighted his sister.

"As soon as I am able to get about I shall have a carpenter to lay the ghost who breaks the bones," said Ward. "The stairs will have to be torn out and rebuilt from top to bottom, all because of that spiteful extra inch."

When Si Bently heard that the deal had gone through his only comment was, "Them MacGregors is about the pigheadedest young folks I ever met up with."



The Female of the Species.*

BY D. A. WASSON.

LATE one afternoon a warm and friendly sou'wester fanned the down-east coaster Monhegan past the Isles of Shoals. Little Cap'n Ephraim Cutwater lowered his canvas-covered spyglass and turned to his six-foot spouse. "Don't ye cal'late we'd better dodge inter Porchmith to-night, Lizy?" he whined. "Looks kinder dirty off there in the southeast!"

When other captains consulted their barometers, Cap'n Ephraim interviewed his wife, to the crew's secret joy. In their opinion "Old Fathom" was all wool and a yard wide, and she could pull the wool over hubby's red little eyes all she chose. She had sailed with him longer than most of them could remember, and it was forecastle gossip that Cap'n Ephraim was skipper only by courtesy.

"Fiddle-de-dee!" scoffed his better three-quarters. "Ephraim Cutwater, you never in the world see more than a little fog with the moon so nigh full as she is, and you know it. We'll haul her right out southeast by east and make our run; that's what we'll do!"

"I wanted to mud her in there to Kittery Cove and try to git at that new leak in the rudder port, Lizy dear," pleaded the captain, trying a new tack.

The imperturbable Mrs. Ephraim cracked a knowing smile. "This old hooker has sweat her little three hundred clips an hour ever since we took her, Ephraim Cutwater, and you know it. She ain't leakin' no more, is she?"

"I kin see the masts of quite a little fleet in there already, Lizy," urged the skipper, raising the glass once more and conveniently forgetting to answer her question.

His helpmeet grunted again. "All you see, or wanter see, Ephraim Cutwater, is the chimleys of them breweries, and you know it. If there's any vessels in there for a harbor they're bound west. If we ever went in there we'd ground onto our beef bones before we ever got out. You'd be three sheets in the wind

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so quick 'twould make your head swim!" With this unconscious truism she waved her hand and dismissed the subject.

Thirsty Cap'n Ephraim regretfully saw the hazy outline of the genial New Hampshire sands slowly merge into the rocky and austere coast of the prohibition state as the Monhegan winged-out and headed down shore with Boon Island's slim white tower over the starboard cathead.

Several craft behind her proceeded sheep-like to follow suit. There was marked, though prudently silent displeasure on the part of the foiled skipper. In his present state of mind he would have liked to see them scudding panic-stricken for port, his own vessel overwhelmed in a sudden tempest and himself vindicated with his tyrannical wife's last gurgling breath.

But no such luck. The dull red sun foundered in a smoky glowing west full of promise for the morrow. A swell, soft and gentle as the touch of a mother's hand, wafted the Monhegan away from the cooling sea of molten light astern, into ominous gloom in the east, which the captain fondly hoped might hide the ingredients of foul weather.

Again no such luck. Its menace too, was scattered, first by a luminous mist over the horizon, then by a wondering oval moon which oozed over the sea rim and hung almost on the jib-boom end, as if to bar the way. Instead it dripped an undulating silvery lane clean to the old schooner's bluff bow, and as the breeze freshened she trod it as eagerly as a boy on forbidden ground. Cap'n Ephraim was moved to admit grudgingly to himself that it was a pretty good kind of night for a run, after all.

Astern, the red and green eyes of one of the silent craft which had reached the same conclusion, followed the Monhegan's bubbling wake devoutly, though wan in the white glare of the moon. A spectral pinnacle of canvas caught and reflected its pale glory as the pursuer closed up slowly on the coaster. It was a dainty white schooner yacht, garbed in the last towering cloth of her fine raiment; a dove with the wings of a swan.

Everyone knows that a stern chase is a long one. This one was so long that the moon no longer lighted the way when the tear and swash of the yacht's foaming progress could be heard from the schooner. It still touched fleetingly on the brasswork of her exquisite decks, but no longer glorified the pinions of this queen of the night as it peeped shyly from behind her.

"Hello aboard the schooner! Where's the other one?" on a sudden from behind the yacht's bellying spinnaker, the sound

echoing hollowly against the Monhegan's dingy sails.

"What other one?" inquired Captain Ephraim dutifully, just as his lady and mistress popped on deck partly clad in her husband's great-coat.

"Why, the one they sawed off from that one," came in tones of triumph from the unseen jester. Faint but appreciative haw-haws from the unseen jackies of the watch. Chorus of sulky silence from the chunky coaster. "No offence, my good man!" resumed the talkative yacht. This was another voice, less pleasant to listen to than the first. "Just report us will you? This is the schooner yacht Free Lance, J. Archibald Martingale owner, from Nassau for Bar Harbor, seventeen days out."

Here Old Fathom entered the conversation in her best heavy weather voice. "Well, this is the schooner Monhegan, J. Ephraim Cutwater master, from Boston for Boothbay, and we been out the biggest part of the night! You can do yer own reportin', you Smart Alecks, and you better sheer off lively or that galoot at the wheel will have ye afoul of us!"

"Good God, Howard, turn out quick!" one of the yachtsmen shouted down the companionway. "Here's the suffragette navy right on top of us!"

"Ephraim Cutwater, will you let anyone insult your pore wife so-fashion? Get right up atop of that house and tell them drunken dudes what we think of 'em, if you're a man!" screamed the maligned one.

At about this time Ephraim arrived on all fours upon the cabin top, but if he had formulated any ideas in flight it is fair to presume that the expression of them would have in no way helped the cause of outraged femininity. He scrambled to his feet and stood speechless, evidently stage struck. Both crews, in various stages of undress uniform, were now enjoying the exchange of amenities.

"Ephraim Cutwater, are you deef and dumb? Your pore wife has been insulted somethin' fearful, and you know it! Tell 'em you won't stand it!" came the voice of the prompter from the wings.

"Suffragette navy!" exclaimed the newest arrival on the yacht's deck. "You're way off, Arch. That's the fog whistle on Cape Elizabeth! We couldn't find it, so they've brought it out to us!"

"Yah! You're drunk!" piped the captain, finding his tongue at last. "Tryin' ter pick up a fog whistle on a clear night! Yah!"

The Monhegan's heavy main boom suddenly sagged inboard. The vessels were now abreast.

"Heads, Cap'n! We're goin' ter gybe! Hard a-port the yacht!" chorused the Monhegans.

The mainsheet did a hop-skip-and-jump in the water, flogged the helmsman and whipped taut with a rattling wrench of blocks. The boom, a gigantic flail imbued with life, swept overhead viciously, and struck tremendously at the offending yacht. Like a stout man hit in the stomach her snowy spinnaker collapsed, rent from luff to leach. The great spinnaker boom stood on end for an instant, then cracked in three pieces and bombarded the deck below. The yacht gybed as if in vain retaliation, came-to with a rush and lay fluttering like a bird with a broken wing.

And the captain of the Monhegan, oh, where was he? Struck bel'nd the knees by the ribald main-boom he knelt gracefully in mid-air and landed froglike in the water half way between the warring craft. "Ephraim Cutwater, you come back here this minute!" screamed Old Fathom, with instinct born of long practice, but this time the poor man failed to obey. The much-rattled mate speared an oar after him, but whether it brained the skipper or proved the life-preserver it was meant for, none aboard the Monhegan could see.

When Eliza and the crew had lowered the center-board, trimmed-in the now subdued mainsail, let go the jib sheets, rolled the wheel down, dropped the leaky yawl-boat off the davits by the run, and manned her, the scene of the collision was, as might have been surmised, a cable's-length to windward. The grim coxswain in all probability was already a widow. Whether or not she realized it, she was as stolid as the Sph'nx.

They pulled back wearily, each short, hurrying sea, slapping the boat full in the face as if to prepare them gradually for the final rebuff. They searched an empty sea, and then silently returned to the schooner, not deigning to speak the craft responsible for the mischief. She still hung in the wind some distance seaward, apparently clearing away the wreckage.

Old Ephraim had been a pretty decent sort of a chap in spite of his failings, thought the sobered pair at the oars. "Guess he must have been stunded by the boom," ventured the sympathetic mate.

"Yes, and you wait till we git this boat h'isted up agin and I'll show ye some of the all-firedest boo-hooin' you ever see!" was the curt reply. Which, the mate decided, was some sentiment for Old Fathom.

The faces of the cook and remaining man grinned over the bulwarks as they drew near. Old Fathom scrambled up the main-

chains unaided and grabbed the head of the culinary department by the scruff of the neck. All hands sighed in relief. Richard was himself again.

"What d'ye mean, ye worthless black scum, by laughin' like a hyena at sech a time as this?" she demanded in a voice which again suggested the Cape Elizabeth fog whistle. "Do you wanter go overboard too?"

"Well, suh—I mean marm," stammered the wriggling cook, "dis no-'count Dutchman yere 'lows how he done see a boat from de yacht pick up Little Nemo—I mean de Cap'n, suh—"

"Ya, ya, yust after you leave der ship," corroborated the Dutchman. "Ay tank he not bane hurt—"

Captain Eliza threw the culprit from her with a snort. Then she strode aft and soon had the Monhegan under way again, this time pointing for the blinding sun, or the half of it visible above the horizon. Half Way Rock's spiky lighthouse stuck up primly some miles inshore.

The mate saw Old Fathom furtively fling what he took to be a wadded handkerchief as far in the direction of Spain as the lightness of the missile would permit.

The Free Lance was just filling away to windward, and the coaster dawdled till she was overtaken again. The breeze was still freshening, but Captain Eliza needed no megaphone. "If you'll let her come-to again, I'll send the boat for my man!" she bellowed, but her voice this time lacked its usual raucous note. "And we'll be much obleeged to ye!"

A portly figure in white flannels jumped on the yacht's rail and held on by the main rigging while he shouted through a cupped hand: "Captain Cutwater presents his compliments, madam, and reports himself as in no condition to resume command of his schooner at present. Moreover, madam, in the process of resuscitation Captain Cutwater accidentally made the acquaintance of a certain brand of wine which has quite taken his fancy, and he desires to continue the tête-à-tête a bit longer." He bowed, flourished his yachting cap elaborately and stepped down, puffing for breath.

Old Fathom's jaw grew squarer. "He does, hey?" she retorted. "Well, then, you kin take the consequences! You know what kidnapin' means!"

"Oh, be a sport, Lizzie! Give the old man a little breathing spell!" was all the satisfaction she got.

Now a light center-board coaster dead before the wind, with a

rapping good whole-sail breeze, is about the slipperiest article in Uncle Sam's fleet of merchant windjammers, and her kind have shown their heels to many an arrogant yacht before now.

In a moderate breeze the Free Lance had overhauled the Monhegan easily with her giant spinnaker pushing its best. But now her spinnaker, or what was left of it, was reposing in the lazaretto, and it was breezing up smartly. Still her people feared not for her laurels. As a matter of fact she had never taken part in just such a contest. So the sailing master scoffed at Old Fathom's vague threat, and scorned to haul his beautiful craft on the wind, at which kind of sailing she could have cut circles around the old coaster.

The Monhegan, with patched sails ballooning and straining and a "bone in her teeth" deep burying her rusty chain bobstay, loomed forebodingly on the yacht's starboard quarter, and slowly drew up in her seething frothy wake.

Brass-bound officers and beflanneled aristocrats on the Free Lance's luxurious decks rubbed their eyes and blinked in amazement, marveling at the fluke in the breeze which thus proved the race not always to the swift. Still they applauded her generously. "Come on, old hoss!" they yelled.

Up, up crawled the Monhegan, her square-headed old mainsail out to port driving its utmost, and the silent helmswoman steering her finest. Conducive to neat work on her part was the spectacle of her errant husband stamping about insanely on the yacht's deck, and cheering his own craft to victory with a long bottle which glinted in the early sunlight as he waved it wildly. No cup racer in a final heat was ever urged on more heartily.

The Monhegan's chubby bow lapped the yacht's main rigging, fore rigging, windlass, stem, bowsprit end. Then Captain Eliza without warning threw her helm hard a-port.

Bang! Rip! Wrench! The big main boom slashed over the Monhegan's deck again like Home Run Baker's bat passing home plate. It landed fair in the Free Lance's faultless white mainsail and made a worse wreck of it than it had a few hours before of her silky spinnaker. Her varnished eighty-foot boom jumped crazily aloft, then stabbed down through the polished cabin and made a still crazier three-master of her. A ravaged club topsail overhead transformed itself into an elephantine flag of truce, whipping mightily on before.

In awful silence the appreciative crew lowered-away the wreck, while the afterguard shook fists, and at the stalwart Nemesis on

the Monhegan's quarter deck hurled epithets unfit for the ear of lady or suffragette. The afflicted yacht was plodding hopelessly along under foresail and gybes as the avenger ranged up alongside again, her crew grinning with delight from ear to ear.

"'Bout ready to send my man abroad, Mr. J. Alphonso What's yer-name?" inquired Captain Eliza with sinister politeness. "Next time I cal'late ter wipe that 'ere toy mahogany launch offn yer port davits, and mebbe put a leetle black stripe along yer hull! Stripes is lucky, ye know!"

A council of war was evidently taking place on the yacht's deck, with Cap'n Ephraim as the *piece de resistance*. As far as could be seen from the Monhegan he was not wildly excited about its outcome. His bottle, it was observed, he waved with increasing facility.

At length the yacht came slowly into the wind, her long bow dipping deep into the rushing sunlit chop and her remaining canvas threshing thunderously in the lively sou'wester. Captain Eliza promptly hove-to, the Monhegan nearby. An oily smoothness to windward marked her drift.

"All right, old woman, come and get your wild man!" shouted one of the Free Lances through a megaphone.

"Oh, no, you don't!" returned Old Fathom, with the nearest approach to a smile seen for some time. "Them terms is all off now! You bring him over here or I'll have that shiny launch ter kindle the galley fire with, spite o' fate!"

That was the last straw. A dinghy was promptly lowered in the yacht's lee; Cap'n Ephraim was hustled into it with no great ceremony, and a couple of sturdy seamen buffeted their spray-blown way into the windless lee of the wall-sided Monhegan.

"Mr. Martingale wanted me to tell ye, ma'am, that any time ye wanted a job as sailing master, just let him know," grinned the stroke oar. "I reckon you'd find us a willin' crew," he added admiringly.

"You tell yer Mister Martingale that he owes me for a new main sheet!" returned the unmoved object of this flattery. "I stranded mine that last wallop I give him."

They did the returned prodigal the honor of lowering him a rope ladder, and he was gaffed overside with plenty of help from both above and below. The truant leered brazenly at his lady, and said conciliatingly, "You was right about not goin' inter Porchmith last night, Lizy. Yer most allus right, Lizy."

She, however, overlooked his maudlin levity and pointed silently

toward the cabin door. This phenomenon might portend anything. Captain Ephraim looked fearfully over his shoulder and then wobbled hastily cabinward.

As the Monhegan passed the crippled yacht for the last time, the crew had their hands more than full in staightening out the havoc and getting ready to bend a new mainsail, a task which in the strong breeze none on the coaster envied them. The beflanneled ones had nothing to say.

"I don't believe that pot-bellied cuss ever offered ye no job at all, ma'am," opined the literal-minded mate. "But if they was real sports they'd at least dip their colors to ye, ma'am."

"I cal'late I dipped their colors for 'em," said Old Fathom with something like a chuckle. "If I ain't mistook they're trailin' astern now along with a strip of that mainsail. Same time I don't misdoubt they're jest itchin' to dip 'em to us."

Majestic Seguin soon shrunk blue over the stern. Off the gray granite Cuckolds the faithful mainsail was hauled down as the Monhegan shivered in the wind's eye for a minute, and she went into Boothbay Harbor still a-boiling. Old Fathom put the finishing touches to her triumph by deftly anchoring in a tangle of small craft behind McFarland's island, while Cap'n Ephraim grinned idiotic approval from the companionway.

"Jest one thing, Lizy," he offered, emboldened by his sojourn with the idle rich, "'t ain't never a good idee to gybe her in a fresh breeze. Better to let her come-to 'n' fill away on the other nail—other tack—other tack."

"When I want any of your advice, Ephraim Cutwater, I'll ask for it, and you know it!" answered Old Fathom tartly.

Extract from shipping columns of following day's New York paper:

> "Spoken: June 13, off Seguin, schooner yacht Free Lance, Nassau for Bar Harbor, 17 days out. Reports experienced heavy weather in Gulf Stream and lost minor sails and spars. All on board well and wished to be reported. By schooner Monhegan, at Boothbay."

Hiram's Wedding Tour.*

BY JOHANNA DUNCAN.

ATIENCE was well named. She had walked to church with Hiram so many times down the elm-bordered street, stepping over the familiar holes in the plank walk, that now he failed to see if she needed any assistance and as he sometimes stalked in front, she found herself following him like a squaw behind her brave.

Miss Nicey from the retirement of her darkened best room, peeped out and shook her head. "I declare to goodness," she said to herself, "they walk along like married people. It is just like having no beau at all but Patience always was queer."

After church Hiram always took dinner with Patience. He had done this when her mother and father were living and now that she was entirely alone in her little cottage with only the nodding hollyhocks for associates, he kept up the custom.

Upon this occasion she had prepared the meal the day before, and early that morning had crawled through the strawberry patch on her knees gathering only the largest ones for his plate. The thickest cream had been whipped and put on ice and her cake was light as a feather.

When the long sermon was over and they returned from the church with its garish light and loud music, it was pleasant to find the little room cool and shaded. The table was laid for two with the best blue china and a bunch of lilacs in the centre.

The quiet atmosphere was restful to the lover who seated himself in the easy chair by the window while Patience took off her hat and moved in and out from the shed kitchen where she lighted the fire to heat the chicken.

Everybody in Rockville ate cold dinner Sunday, the housekeepers having worked twice as hard the day before to earn this privilege, but Hiram did not fancy the cold meat and gravy at his brother's house and he felt sure it was a pleasure to Patience to warm his food so he felt no compunctions about allowing her to do it.

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After wrestling through his meals with his numerous nephews and nieces, it was such a comfort to sit in this quiet room and pick up his book with the marker just where he had left it a week ago. It was such a relief to have the desired joint of the chicken without hearing Jimmie say, "Ma, I want a fat leg like Uncle Hiram's. I don't want this neck," and then the wail.

It was so peaceful to fall into a gentle doze after dinner, with the odor of the lilacs about him, while Patience tiptoed around the table removing the dishes and replacing the embroidered centerpiece.

She always drew the blinds a little closer to keep the sun from his eyes, and then sat with her book, looking from its open page to the bald spot on the top of his head. She would have liked to read the paper but the rustling sheets might disturb him.

"Have I been to sleep?" he would ask surprised, as he sat straighter in his chair, and she would smile.

It is a luxury to most women to mother something that does not actually belong to them.

Hiram worked hard all the week, rarely coming to the village except on Sunday, although his farm was only a few miles distant. He had been brought up to believe that courting was not a pastime to be indulged in when plowing could be done.

This was his weekly holiday to sit with Patience and discuss their future. They had decided many years ago, before those little lines came about her lips, that three things were absolutely necessary. They must have an oak set of furniture, a new buggy and a week's tour. They were going to New York and up the Hudson. After seeing the world for that length of time they would be willing to settle down for life.

This process of settling had taken place years before but neither seemed conscious of it since they did not outgrow each other. The engagement had lasted through many disappointing harvests, it had been to the funeral of several horses with colic, it had countenanced the purchase of new farm machinery and built a barn, but there had never been a season when the three essentials could be acquired.

Hiram coughed a little after he waked, for he must have a candid talk with Patience and tell her that he could not see his way clear to being married this summer.

"We could not get along without the set," he said dolefully, "and we are obliged to have the buggy and I've only saved just half enough for the trip on account of my failure in the hay crop."

"Well, don't you bother, Hiram; I'll think up something. We can't expect to have everything in the world." Patience was always

cheerful. "You have a good farm with a house on it so you are well off, and I am very comfortable here by myself. These three rooms keep me pretty busy, and what with the garden, the cow and my flowers, the time just flies."

"I've put away enough for the set and the buggy," he kept repeating, "but have only half enough for the trip. It will take another year to save it."

"There, don't be down about it. We don't have to buy any medicine, we are not blind or deaf and all the trees are growing around your house that we planted ten years ago so we ought to be happy."

She turned her face away that he might not see her lip quiver, but when he left that afternoon she whispered something to him at the gate which sent him away smiling.

One day about a week later Hiram drove into town in a new buggy with red wheels, tied the horse to Patience's fence, and after a few moments they came out together and walked straight to the clerk's office where they were married.

By the time the magistrate had pronounced the blessing the entire village was astir.

Miss Nicey was deeply offended. She had never dreamt that the marriage so long anticipated, could take place without her services, but she always knew Patience was secretive. However, nobody ought to mind missing a wedding where the bride wore her same blue serge and not even a new feather. Miss Nicey grew more and more scornful as she watched them through the hole in the curtain.

They had reached the little gate and paused, looking at the new buggy, then Hiram shook hands with the bride gravely, got in and drove away. Patience smiled at him as he turned the corner and she then went into the house.

"Gone to take the horse to the livery," said Miss Nicey conclusively, remaining glued to her peep hole, but she grew very tired watching, for dusk came and he did not return.

Patience came out with the watering-pot and tended her flowers as usual, talking pleasantly to one or two neighbors who paused to congratulate her; but Miss Nicey noted the surprise on their faces as they moved away, and finally her curiosity overcame her.

She put on her cameo breastpin, smoothed her hair a little flatter, and tripped across the street.

"I've come over to see what you are doing Patience. I never was so surprised in my life as your getting married without telling anybody, but I don't blame you, seeing how long we have been looking for it all these years. Where is Hiram?"

She peeped into the rain-barrel and around the corner of the porch as if to discover the elusive groom.

"He has gone to Boston and to New York and up the Hudson," was the quiet reply.

Miss Nicey gasped. "What on earth has happened to him? Has he gone plumb crazy?"

"Well, you see," explained the bride, "he was so blue about losing his crop this year we both couldn't go, so I just sent him by himself and that will save all my expenses. I don't need any new clothes without the trip and when he comes back next week I'll be all packed to go to the farm. It would bother me mightily to have a husband around while I am packing. I've been to Boston once, but Hiram has never been anywhere and this is his only chance. I am going to enjoy the oak set and the buggy, and he is taking the trip."

Their Last Ride.*

BY ETHEL SABIN PHILLIPS.

EMERGING from behind the sheltering walls of the canyon, the team settled into a five mile gait. The wagon rattled and rumbled over the hard surface of the mesa road that lay like a pale snake across the land, keeping ever to the tops of the ridges, curving to avoid arroyos, yet always descending gradually across the vast expanse of the foothills to the green valley of the Rio Grande.

Each mile of the road, bordered with ever-recurring patches of mesquite, soap weed and creosote, was like every other mile; perhaps differing in the minor detail of spacing, yet disclosing no variation.

Like the never-changing, ever-changing aspect of the country, were the two men who occupied the seat of the wagon. Differing as one man from another, yet alike as a type; lean, grizzled and bronzed; as typical of the cow country as the sparse vegetation of the long dry and barren plains skirting the better pasturage of the canyons and higher reaches of the foothills.

In the wagon box, inanimate as the water barrel, the battered pail and the sack of feed which shared its bed, lay a slight, stark object wrapped in a gray blanket. The blanket was wet, and the air, immediately above its gruesome folds, was cooler than would seem possible under the brazen glare of the climbing sun.

The increasing heat of the open road, thrust itself interruptingly upon the silence of the two men.

Jim Riley looked restlessly behind him and then at the other man whom he addressed.

"Funny notion some folks get about dyin', ain't it? As if it made any difference what becomes of the bank book after you've cashed in *your* checks. Seems like the more civilized an' Christianized folks get, the more on-religious they is in their notions about bein' buried. It's plumb foolish shippin' dead folks back home."

"Does seem foolish, but I reckon it's a sight of comfort to their folks," said Porter, slapping the lines along the horses' backs.

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"Well, that's what I'm gettin' at. Take this chap; he ain't been home fer three years; it ain't like they hadn't gotten used to livin' without him. Why, since he's been to the ranch, he ain't written home oftener'n once a month. They've gotten over runnin' to the door every time the postman comes. See? Suppose we'd jest written to 'em tellin' 'em that he died peaceful an' easy like, never knowin' it was comin' till the end, leavin' out the fear that looked out of his eyes when he tasted blood on his lips, an' that he was lyin' out here in the foothills, in the open, where he died, with a grand old mountain fer his everlastin' monument. Wouldn't that've been better'n this? An' this ain't all, 'tho I reckon it's the worst. It's a long ways back to Tennessee in a baggage car. No sir-re, none of it fer mine! If I'm lucky enough to get mine in the open, let me lay right there in a hole clost by, with a half a continent a-rollin' down hill in front of me. That's big enough fer me. I want to lay where I die an' my boots on," Riley ended. Then shifting in his seat he raised a restraining hand.

Porter brought the team to a halt. Riley jumped to the road and went to the back of the wagon. "Lord, but it's hot," he said gravely, dipping the pail into the barrel and dashing water over the stark form wrapped in the gray blanket.

Presently the wagon moved on again. Drop after drop the water fell from the cracks of the wagon bed, only to be absorbed by the dust-dry atmosphere, almost before it reached the burning gravel.

"Poor boy, I bet he'd never have asked us to try to get him to El Paso in time if he'd have known what the heat means on a job like this—an' I'm not knowin' yet, that we'll be in time. Seems like this is hotter weather 'n common."

"We can't do no mor'n to try," Porter said. "I felt like tellin' him it wasn't no use, but his eyes looked so kinda hungry, an' he spent the last breath he had longin' for home—him a lyin' there lookin' out at the sunrise over beyond the Sacramentoes."

"Sure, we're doin' the only thing we can do, but it's almighty tough."

At noon the drooping horses demanded a rest. The men climbed down and made camp. True to their cowboy training, they had made no provision for themselves, but the horses were fed and watered and rested for an hour. Fed and watered and rested by the burning, unsheltered roadside, but fanned by a merciful breeze.

Porter took a folded blanket from the wagon seat and threw it over a couple of mesquite bushes; it cast a narrow strip of shade and the two men, seeking this, stretched out in the hot sand.

"Poor devil," Riley said, watching the drip of the water under the

wagon. "Died like a Christian an' a sport, an' then—this."

"Well, it's what he wanted, an' I reckon that's all the livin' can do fer the dead."

"You bet," Riley replied laconically.

"Y' see, he was an exile, an' these great old plains with the lights an' the shaders a-changin' an' a-changin' in the sun an' in the moonlight an' under the stars, they wasn't filled with nothin' fer him but loneliness. Y' remember him a-sayin' some poetry, out of a magazine, about 'lookin' out on the sage brush an' stretchin' yearnin' hands, an' the long unbroken reaches of th' desert's burnin' sands'? Well, that's what this country was to him—a desert. Now, you an' me, we're used to the bigness an' we don't call it lonesome. It's the land of memories to us, jest like Tennessee was the land of memories to him—an' that's what a man hankers fer, I reckon, when he comes to the great divide. Like a little kid a-wantin' of his mother, a man's a-wantin' of his home."

Riley raised on his elbow: "Yep, you're right, all right, an' I'm hopin' by the Eternal, that we'll beat time to the undertaker's. Let's drag it, what d'you say? Gosh, but those birds up there, is gettin' on my nerves."

Porter opened his eyes and looked, out and above, into the blue of the sky where vagrant clouds, like drifts of snow, were drifting from the west. There, soaring on lazy wing, circling, sailing, drifting on the wind, gaunt buzzards watched afar.

When again upon the road, the two men lasped into silence. Each time that Riley dipped the battered pail into the lowering water in the barrel, his soul grew sick within him, and each time, as he regained his seat, he muttered: "Lord, I hope I'll die in the open but I want they should dig me a hole before them varmints, up there, gets onto *my* job."

So the hours passed; passed with the changing shadows on the hills; when one was gone, another followed, and hours and shadows alike seemed without end.

Finally the smoke of El Paso could be seen, a faint cloud floating above graveled hills.

"We're on the last lap now, Riley, but I'm afraid the old gray blanket will be his shroud, poor chap, and when they screws the lid down here, it'll stay down till the last trump. We've done our best but the sun's goin' to beat us to it. I'm not wantin' to take no more rides like this."

"Nor me. I liked this chap fine, but I'll not be sorry to say goodbye, this time," Riley said brusquely. He was standing on the back

wheel, ready to jump into the road after emptying the last bucket of water on the gray blanketed figure, and he looked back now, at that stark form, and, with his pitying eyes still lingering there, he jumped.

An automobile, coming from the rear, shot past. A warning cry from Porter, a shout and a woman's scream, rang in Jim Riley's ears as he passed over the great divide. His lips softened to the shadow of a smile, at the involuntary bidding of his last consciousness, when fear and shock had passed with the swift review of the panorama of a lifetime.

Porter, grappling with the frightened horses, gray and grim, choked an unfamiliar sound within his throat, and, shocked as he was, it was as nothing to the sorrow that gave no outward sign.

The man from the automobile, it was, who laid Riley's battered body beside the road and covered the sightless eyes that seemed now, to stare with a fixed horror at the black specks against the evening sky; specks that sailed and soared and drifted on the wind.

"Anythin' you can do? Sure. Stay by Riley till I can bring somebody. It ain't a joyful job I know; tough on the lady, but it's the best we can do. I've got one dead man aboard already. Fifty miles we've brought him so's that he could be buried decent, back in Tennessee. We've got him in a blanket, an' we've kept it wet all the way, but the sun's been fierce an' th' evaporation ain't done much good, so y' see I can't wait now. But I'll be right back, an' say, if you've got any pull, I want to dig a hole right here fer Riley. That was what he wanted—to die in the open—an' to lay—where he died. Me an' him, we've lived half a lifetime together, an' I'll give the rest of mine to see that he gets what he wants—wanted.

"Well, so long, I'll be pullin' my freight. Git up Roany! Git up Boney! Poor old *caballos*—y'ain't got much hustle left in you, have you? But we're one lighter, now, than we was," Porter choked as the horses started down the steep grade.

"So he got his in the open, poor old Jim," Porter mused. His face was drawn and gray but a new determination stamped it now.

"Well, pard, I'll see that you *lie* in the open too, with half the world lyin' at your feet, an' the grand old mountain'll be your everlastin' monument, an' you'll be sleepin' right at home. An', Jim," he said, looking up into the marvelous blue that surmounted the riot of the sunset, "the birds is a-followin' of my freight an' there ain't no black specks, back there, a-flyin' between you an' heaven."

The Ivory Image.*

BY JAMES FRANCIS DWYER.

HIS is a simple story telling how Daniel Cupid, with the help of the Long Arm of Coincidence, a little image of Bhavani the Terrible, and a stenographer's vanity, macadamized the Path of True Love. The incidents took place in New York during the hurry and scurry of a presidential election, and, therefore, were not considered worthy of a newspaper paragraph. If they had happened in Bagdad during the reign of the good Haroun al Raschid they would have formed bazaar gossip for a month. Which proves, if proof is wanting, that New York is more wonderful than Bagdad, and that happenings which would have stirred the city by the Tigris are jerked into the waste basket by the blasé editors of Park Row.

Kathleen Grady and Tommy Flynn loved each other with the love that keeps its bloom for all time. Tommy was a lineman employed by the New York Telephone Company; Kathleen was a stenographer in a shipping office on Broadway. Bill Grady, the father of Kathleen, was a political power in the Ninth Ward, and as Tommy didn't know the difference between a Republican and a Democrat, Bill Grady turned a cold eye upon his aspirations. A man who didn't have a Party was something of a freak in the eyes of the politician. He decided that Tommy was not the person he wanted for a son-in-law, and knowing that the boy had no money, he made the financial question a club with which to strike at the youngster's hopes.

"I couldn't think of letting a man come after my daughter unless he had a thousand plunks in cold storage," said Mr. Grady. "As you haven't a nickel in the vault I think you can consider yourself out of the race. Besides, I'm thinkin' that Kathleen will marry Jimmy Hanrahan."

Tommy Flynn took the blow with all the courage he could muster. Hanrahan, who lived with the Grady's, was a red-headed, undersized man that he hated cordially. Furthermore, he knew that

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Kathleen shared his dislike. Hanrahan was supposed to have independent means. He had no occupation, but he was always well supplied with money. As to how he came by it no one had the slightest knowledge. Some asserted that he was a person with a peculiar reputation, and even Bill Grady was puzzled as to how his boarder came by so much wealth. But Bill, being in politics, was not given to prying into other people's business, and Hanrahan's dollars made an impression. The red-headed man had shown a liking for the bright little stenographer, and now that Tommy Flynn had been disposed of, the politician endeavored to give the shifty Hanrahan all the assistance he could. He ordered Kathleen to put the lineman from her mind, and in the blunt language for which he was noted, he told the red-headed suitor to go in and win.

It was six weeks after the dismissal of Tommy Flynn that Daniel Cupid thought it high time to do something in repairing the ruts that had ditched Tommy's car of joy. And the wonder of this story lies in the manner in which the little god performed his work. Mrs. Grady, in walking through the hall of the flat one morning before breakfast, picked up a small ivory image hardly more than an inch high, and wondering much how the object came into the apartment, she sought counsel with the family.

"What the dickens is it?" asked Grady.

"It seems to be a new breed of female Billiken," said Mrs. Grady.

"It's a lovely little woman. My! isn't she cute?" cried Kathleen.

The little figure was exceedingly beautiful, and the tiny link of gold in the head of the image, immediately suggested to the mind of Kathleen that her mother's find would make a valuable addition to the bunch of trinkets she carried upon the chain that circled her neck.

"Wouldn't it look fine there?" she cried, as she slipped the image upon the chain. "I'm going to keep it."

"But it isn't ours," protested Mrs. Grady. "It might belong to Mr. Hanrahan."

"Ask him," said Kathleen.

Mrs. Grady hurried along the hall and knocked upon the boarder's door, but she got no response.

"He's out or he's fast asleep," she whispered, tiptoeing back to the dining room.

"Well, I'm going to wear it to-day," announced Kathleen. "If it's his property he can register his claim, and I'll turn it over when I get home. It's the cutest little thing I have ever seen."

"But if it's Hanrahan's," muttered Grady, "he might—"

"Oh, she won't hurt it," interrupted Mrs. Grady. "Let her wear it to-day."

Daniel Cupid grinned as Kathleen raced down the stairs, hurried along Hudson Street into Christopher and took the "L" downtown. Daniel had started in to clean up the obstructions in the path of Tommy Flynn.

Now and again Kathleen glanced at the little carving upon her breast, but all trace of wonder as to how the object had reached the Grady hall had been swept from her mind. The immediate present was all that concerned the stenographer, and the fact that she possessed the image for the time being brought her extreme satisfaction.

At Cortlandt Street she alighted from the "L" and walked smartly towards Broadway, but as she neared Trinity Place she discovered that a slim, sharp youth who had walked beside her down the steps from the train, was taking particular notice of her. He was scarcely more than fifteen years of age; his face was dark, and he was somewhat stooped and wizened looking. Miss Grady remembered seeing a performance at Coney Island in which three men with exactly the same cast of features had caused trees to sprout mysteriously from little mounds of dirt. The boy's eyes, that were deep and penetrating, scrutinized Kathleen as she walked along, and with feminine instinct the girl made a quick examination of her clothing in search of a reason. There was nothing wrong with her attire, and wondering much why she had been subjected to such a close inspection she walked hurriedly along.

The boy stopped in the shelter of a doorway on the opposite side of the Place, his face turned towards the girl who was rapidly overtaking him. The keen, dark eyes were observing her from beneath the brim of the old slouch hat, and the scrutiny annoyed Miss Grady. Her tilted nose expressed her indignation, but the youth was not looking at her nose. Neither did he notice the blazing blue eyes which would have informed any ordinary person that Miss Kathleen's Irish blood resented the impertinence of a stranger.

The stenographer paused for a moment immediately before the youth who appeared to have fallen into an hypnotic trance. "It's a three fifty waist!" cried the indignant Kathleen. "There's lace insertion down the front; it's hemmed all the way round, and it's guaranteed not to warp in the hottest climate!" In a Broadway shipping office a bright young lady learns the very latest methods of suppressing the attentions of members of the opposite sex.

The words seemed to waken the youth. He gave one glance at

the girl's angry face, then with a little cry of alarm he dashed across the street and disappeared down Broadway.

"Well, I never!" soliloquized Miss Grady, as she resumed her walk. "He can rubber more in three seconds than a waggon load of rubes can do on a car trip."

The incident remained in her mind after she reached the office, and the opening tattoo she played on her typewriter proved that her temper had not dropped back to normal.

"Say, Miss Cline," she remarked, as a companion stenographer took her place near by, "I struck a freshy coming up from the 'L' this morning. He looked me over as if I was a remnant on a bargain counter."

Miss Cline yawned. "That so?" she murmured wearily. "Pass me the rubber, will yer? Who's the duchess that you're carryin' on your neck chain?"

"That's a female Billikin that ma picked up in the hall this morning," replied Miss Grady. "Do you like her?"

The assistant manager came along at that moment, and the talk ended. For two hours Miss Grady's typewriter clicked madly, then she stopped to rest herself by staring through the glass partition at the people in the front office. For a few minutes she stared at the little cluster in front of the counter, then she leaned across to Miss Cline and pointed excitedly to the street door.

"See the kid?" she cried. "Look, the fellow with the black hat!"

Miss Cline lifted her false tresses. "Yes, I see him."

"That's the freshy who rubbered at me this morning!" cried Miss Grady.

"Oh," murmured Miss Cline, "I thought it was a man that looked at you."

"I didn't say so!" snapped Miss Kathleen. "If your imagination makes you think of grown dudes every time a person mentions the opposite sex I can't help it."

"But what's he doin' now?" asked Miss Cline, ignoring the thrust.

Miss Grady didn't reply. She was watching the youth intently. He hadn't seen her up to that moment, but his dark eyes were roaming round the office. The moment they fell upon her he dropped the folder that he carried in his hand and rushed to the street. Little did Kathleen know how busy the little love god was at that moment. Little did she understand the amazing plans he was perfecting to bring her Tommy back and to bring disaster upon the red-headed Hanrahan.

In three minutes the boy reappeared at the door, but this time he was accompanied by a small woman whose face was completely covered by a silk shawl. The pair appeared to be laboring under great excitement. The youth spoke a few words to the woman, who flashed a glance at the stenographer, then the pair retreated quickly to the street.

"Well, did you ever?" cried Miss Kathleen. "He brought his ma to have a peep at me!"

"P'raps he's picked you out as his feeongsay," remarked the acidulous Miss Cline. "I shouldn't wonder if he's a European nobleman in disguise."

The manager called Miss Grady to take dictation, and it was lunch time before her duties allowed her a free moment to think over the happenings of the morning. But the instant she passed out of the building with the intention of breaking her fast at the little restaurant in Liberty Street, the incidents flashed up before her mind. Some half dozen paces from the door of the office, and watching it intently, was the woman with the shawl who had been in the company of the boy a few hours before!

Miss Grady stood staring at the woman, who was watching her with the same fixed look that she had noticed upon the face of the boy in Cortlandt Street, then the watcher shuffled quickly away.

The perplexed stenographer ate her lunch and returned to the office, and for the rest of the afternoon she received no attentions from strangers. In fact, the press of work due to the sudden indisposition of Miss Cline, gave her no spare moments in which to watch for the reappearance of the boy or the woman, but in the reticule of her mind the peculiar occurrences were firmly fixed. She wished that Tommy Flynn were somewhere near so that she could relate the story to him, but she hadn't seen Tommy for six weeks.

Kathleen left the office at five o'clock, but instead of proceeding straight home as she was in the habit of doing, her footsteps were diverted by a trick of Fate. Grady said it was Fate when he heard the story that evening, but Grady knew nothing of the powers of Daniel Cupid. Miss Kathleen was a member of a friendly society called The Daughters of Greenwich Village, and on this eventful day the secretary of the society had asked her to call upon a sick member who resided in Carmine Street between Bedford and Varick.

Miss Grady left the "L" at Houston Street, walked to Varick and turned northward towards Carmine. As near as she could recollect afterwards it was at the corner of Carmine Street that the

real quick action of the day started. Cupid had arranged his batteries, and it was at that moment that he decided to shell Mr. Jimmy Hanrahan and regain for Miss Kathleen her Throne of Bliss. A wonder-seeking child might have seen the squadrons of the love god charging up Carmine Street behind the pretty stenographer, but Miss Grady saw nothing, only a weeping foreign woman who was rocking herself to and fro on the sidewalk. The woman was crouched against the wall of a house, and she cried loudly as the girl approached.

"What is it?" asked Kathleen, her tender heart touched by the evident woe that had fallen upon the weeping one.

"Baby seeck," sobbed the woman. "Baby verry seeck, pretty one."

Miss Grady was interested. The very nature of the errand upon which she was bent, made her sympathetic to the poor creature on the sidewalk.

"What is the matter with the baby?" she asked.

"He seeck, much bad," cried the mother. "Look at heem, beautiful one."

"Where is he?" asked Kathleen.

The woman jerked herself to her feet with a peculiar motion and clasped the dress of the stenographer. "Just a leetle way," she sobbed. "Please, pretty one, come and look at heem."

The girl nodded her head, and the woman trotted before her up the street. For about twenty yards she walked rapidly, then she turned into the doorway of an uninviting tenement house and pointed to a battered baby carriage that stood just inside the door.

The stenographer stopped at the entrance and peered at the mite in the carriage. It was a dark skinned baby, and the big, round eyes seemed unnaturally large in the small, pinched face.

"Is poor baby sick?" murmured Miss Grady; then to the woman she said: "Why not take him to the hospital?"

"Ospeetal no good," sobbed the woman, staring hard at the girl, "you cure heem much quicker."

"Me?" cried the girl.

"Yes, you cure heem."

"How?"

The woman remained quiet for a moment, then she pointed to the little ivory image which the girl had placed on her neck that morning, and with face half averted, she said: "Touch heem with Bhavani, beautiful princess. Touch heem with the Black One, please."

Kathleen was flattered by the request and the language in which it was made, but she could not understand how the ivory image possessed any curative properties. With a little giggle of astonishment at the peculiar petition, she held the small carving in her hand and asked for information.

"Why, how can I do it with this?" she asked.

"It is Bhavani, beautiful one," murmured the woman. "Touch heem, please."

Now Miss Grady was not versed in Hindu mythology. It was a branch of learning that had no place in the curriculum of the business college from which she had graduated, and she had no idea that the little piece of ivory represented the consort of Siva, the dread Bhavani, whose power cannot be expressed in words. But she was willing to please the soft-voiced woman who made the request. She stepped towards the baby carriage, and leaning over, touched the whimpering baby upon the forehead with the image.

Whether the action startled the child and caused him to forget his pain, or whether he experienced a change for the better at that moment, will never be known, but it is a fact that he immediately stopped crying, and the mother lifted up her hands and poured a flood of strange words towards the ceiling of the hall.

"It was Bhavani, pretty one," she whispered, turning to the astonished girl. "The Black One has cured heem. He has cry like that for tree days."

Miss Grady smiled and blushed. The words of the woman brought her a little thrill of pleasure, and she was not averse to flattery.

The woman pushed the carriage containing the sleeping child back into the shadows, and the girl, whose vanity chained her to the scene of her triumph, walked a few paces beside her, listening with amazement to the strange words in which the mother expressed her gratitude.

Another woman came down the dark stairs, and to her the wonder tale was unfolded in a tongue that was strange to Miss Kathleen. It was at that moment the girl was filled with a vague sense of alarm. The woman on the stairs came nearer, and Miss Grady saw her face. It was the woman with the shawl who had looked at her in the office, and who had watched her when she went to lunch.

A cold chill of dread made the girl turn towards the street door, but the door had been silently closed. Kathleen was alarmed. She made a rush for the entrance, but the mother of the baby flung herself in her path.

"You must touch heem again, pretty one!" she cried. "You must touch heem when he wakes."

"Let me out!" cried the girl. "Let me out!"

But her immediate departure was something that the women were not inclined to permit. The woman on the stairs rushed down to help the mother of the baby, and the girl became hysterical.

"You must stay till he wakes and touch heem again!" cried the mother. "Please, pretty one, stay!"

Miss Grady tore the little piece of ivory from her chain and flung it on the floor. "Take your precious Bhavani!" she cried. "Let me out of this at once!"

But the possession of the little image did not lessen the desire which the two women exhibited to keep her in the house. While the girl struggled to reach the door, the woman with the shawl head-dress picked up the carving and replaced it upon the chain.

"The pretty one must carry it," she cried. "It is through her that Bhavani works. How could she come here unless the pretty one brought her?"

Kathleen Grady's nerves gave way at that moment. If the women had fought back when she struck at them, the strain of Irish in her blood would have made her set her teeth and wade in, but their passive resistance unnerved her. The calm and methodical manner in which they obstructed her produced a corrosive terror which bit into her soul.

"My mother is waiting for me!" she cried. "Let me out!"

"When he wakes," they cried in chorus. "When you touch heem again you can go."

Quietly, but firmly, they hustled the girl along the passage and up the stairs. The stenographer was sobbing hysterically. The repeated pleadings of the pair had unnerved her. Her limbs were weak with fear, and before she was really aware that she had left the hall she found herself locked in a small room at the head of the stairs.

She listened to the footsteps of the two women as they returned to the bottom floor to the sick child, and then she rushed to the window of the room and endeavored to lift the sash. It was nailed down securely. One of the small panes of glass was broken, however, and after picking out the jagged pieces, the girl thrust her head through the opening and surveyed the outer world. The window was fully twenty feet from the ground, and there was no fire escape. The back windows of the houses that fronted Downing Street showed no signs of life, but as she gazed hopelessly around, the head and body of a man appeared above the roof of a house some distance

to the right. Dan Cupid was preparing for a grand charge. The figure on the housetop was a lineman who was busily engaged in looping a telephone wire over a glass insulator that he had fixed in the side of the brick wall.

Miss Grady gave one piercing scream of "Tommy!" and when the startled Mr. Flynn looked in her direction, she repeated the yell and fainted, her head still thrust through the broken window pane.

* * * * * * *

It was Tommy Flynn and a burly policeman who brought Miss Kathleen Grady and the two women worshippers of the terrible Bhavani to the Fourteenth Precinct, and a gray-haired captain listened patiently to the girl's story. He betrayed no excitement till Miss Grady produced the ivory carving, but when he saw that and heard how it came into the girl's possession, he whistled softly and clawed the leaves of a book upon his desk.

"Is there anyone else in the house besides your mother and father?" he asked.

"There's a lodger, Mr. Hanrahan," sobbed Kathleen.

"A red-headed fellow?" cried the captain.

Miss Grady nodded, and the captain gave a loud bellow that brought two men from an inner room. In a hoarse whisper he gave them certain instructions that sent them running out of the station, and then he motioned Miss Kathleen and Tommy Flynn to a seat.

"Must we wait?" asked Tommy Flynn.

"For ten minutes," said the captain cheerfully. "Just ten minutes. I might tell ye something then if you're a good boy and girl."

The telephone rang loudly at the expiration of fifteen minutes, and the captain answered it. After he had bellowed back a short order he put the receiver back on the hook, heaved a great sigh of relief, and beckoned Tommy Flynn and Kathleen to the desk.

"They've got him," he said. "I sent Mullins and Kilbane over and they pinched him in bed. He must sleep part of the day so that he can work well in the night."

"Who?" asked Tommy. "Who did you pinch?"

"The red-headed guy that has been boarding with Bill Grady," snorted the captain. "He's Ginger Jimmy, the bank buster. He cleared five thousand dollars' worth of gold and silver curios out of the Hunter Museum last night, and this little ivory goddess was in the batch. I have the description here. He must have dropped it in the hall when he was coming in this morning, and by the same token, it's a great bit of luck for the girl."

"How?" asked Tommy.

"There's a reward of a thousand dollars out," said the captain, "and I guess it's hers."

Outside in the street, Miss Kathleen stopped sobbing and looked at Tommy Flynn. "How much did father say we would have to have to start housekeeping?" she asked.

"A thousand dollars," said Tommy.

"Well, we have it," snapped Miss Grady. "I am going to make you a present of the thousand for saving my life. No, don't kiss me here, Tommy, you can kiss me in the parlor when I tell mother and father that you risked your neck climbing down to that window."

A Trial Run.*

BY H. P. HOLT.

"IT'S as near a perfect bit of work as you will find on this earth," murmured Professor Edicombe ecstatically, as he gazed on his handiwork.

Jem Gannett scratched his head, bewildered.

"There hain't no manner of doubt there's money in it—hif wot you say is right," he said in somewhat awed tones.

"It represents just ten years' labour," remarked the professor. "I began it with the idea of startling the world as a colossal joke, but I've got so infernally hard up recently that I don't see why I shouldn't make it help me to put my bank balance right."

"There's 'undreds an' thousands in it, pervidin' it works right, Perfessor."

"It cannot help doing that. I have arranged for everything, so far as human ingenuity can arrange," said the professor, casting an approving glance over the form that stood leaning against the wall.

Jem's eyes shone. The more he considered the situation the more enthusiastic he became.

"Of course, hif the bloomin' clockwork goes wrong we stand a good chance of bein' found out. Hi won't say as we shouldn't be sent to quod for false pretences," he observed thoughtfully.

"It isn't clockwork, Mr. Gannett. Everything in it is done by electricity. Two levers at the back control the whole figure."

Again Jem Gannett scratched his head. In his early life he had been a famous athlete; in later years adipose tissue and short wind had turned him into a trainer. He had had one or two well-known runners through his hands, but he had never achieved fame as a trainer, and his imagination ran riot as he contemplated possibilities with the electric man.

"I let you share the secret," said the professor, "because I really know nothing whatever about the world of athletics, and how these races are conducted. Besides, it will need two of us to work the thing successfully."

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"It suttingly looks just like a real man there. Are you sure you've got the runnin' action right?"

"Perfectly. He has three speeds—walking, trotting, and running, and when he is going there is nobody could detect him from a living being. Come down to the lawn, and we'll give him a trip."

"We'll 'ave to find a name for 'im. Wot do you propose?"

"I hardly know, Mr. Gannett."

"Hi suppose 'e can't talk, amongst 'is other accomplishments?"

"No. It seems to me that if he becomes the most famous runner in the world that will be quite enough."

"P'raps. Maybe you 'adn't thought that w'en 'e is famous we shall 'ave all the newspaper hinterviewers tryin' to get a word in hedgeways with 'im."

"Candidly, I had not seriously considered that factor."

"Well, it orter be thought of. Hif you take my tip you'll call 'im William Jones, an' hinform the public that 'e's deaf an' dumb. In a manner of speakin' it won't be a huntruth."

"True, true. He shall be William Jones, a deaf mute. Now come down to the lawn, and see him work."

Mr. Gannett, regarding the affair as uncanny, stepped back a pace as the professor approached the electric man.

Mr. Jones was a triumph of scientific skill. Internally, and even on the outside, he looked marvellously realistic. The face was made of some composition, and although the expression never altered it would have deceived anyone.

The body was dressed in vest and "shorts," and the wiry looking legs, which were the chief part of the apparatus, had taken up two years of the professor's time before he was perfectly satisfied with them.

The electric man was taken, arm-in-arm with the professor, to the front of the house, and then put through his paces. There was nothing about the walk of Mr. Jones to suggest irregularities.

"Hi s'pose 'e can go round a circular track?" queried Jem Gannett anxiously.

"Yes. All I have to do is to adjust this lever. Then he describes a perfect circle. Watch him."

The automaton began to walk round and round the lawn, with a stately tread, his head thrown a little backwards, and his arms swinging naturally.

"There's 'undreds an' 'undreds in it," ejaculated the amazed trainer. "We'll make a fortune in the bets alone, without countin' prizes. Let's see 'im trot."

The professor pulled one of the levers over slightly, and Mr. Jones broke into a quick trot.

"Hif this hain't great, Hi'll eat my 'at!" observed Jem with entire satisfaction. "Let's see 'im do a 'undred yards in ten seconds, an' Hi'll die 'appy."

Another twist of the lever, and Mr. Jones began to run as fast as any human being ever covered the track on foot. His style was faultless, and he was as cool as a cucumber.

"'Ow long will 'e keep that up without doin' 'isself a hinjury, Perfessor?"

"About ten hours," said the maker of Mr. Jones, contentedly.

"Can 'e go any faster?"

"There is practically no limit to his speed. It all depends on how far you twist the lever."

There was silence for a while as Mr. Jones described small circles, and then Jem Gannett scratched his head again in perplexity.

"This is right enough in its way," the trainer remarked very slowly, "but it just occurs to me that hif this mechanical gent starts runnin', somebody's got to run after 'im to stop 'im, an' hif you think people's goin' to be taken in w'en you 'ave to kind of persuade a sprinter to hease up by diggin' 'im in the back, you're mistook."

The professor smiled blandly.

"That is the simplest part of the whole affair," he said. "A sprinter always has to cross the tape at the finish. The least pressure on the front of Mr. Jones stops the works entirely, and he falls forward exactly like a man who has collapsed. But even if the tape gave no pressure you or I would be a little beyond the winning post, and by extending a hand on to his chest as he passed, would fetch him down in a perfectly natural fall. Just try it on him."

Mr. Gannett, feeling the thing was eerie in the extreme, had some diffidence in approaching the runner as he passed. It seemed almost impossible to believe that the figure was not a real, living being.

He put his hand out and touched Mr. Jones lightly on the chest, half expecting the automaton to turn round angrily and ask him what he meant by taking liberties. Instead, Mr. Jones threw up his hands in a most life-like fashion, lurched a step or two forward, exactly like an athlete who had spent his last ounce of strength, and fell down. The only movement left was a heaving of the chest.

Round eyed and a trifle pale with excitement, Mr. Gannett looked down at the prostrate form.

"Mr. Jones is the greatest thing that ever 'appened," he declared

enthusiastically. "There's a mint of money in it. But wot 'appens to 'im after 'e's fallen at the end of the race?"

The professor made a comical face.

"You, Mr. Gannett, as his trainer, naturally get to his side first. You put your arm through his—so, press this lever and he walks off with you as meekly as a lamb, like this."

Mr. Jones had arisen, with assistance, and as he strolled across the lawn he appeared as fresh as ever.

"There's just one other thing, Perfessor. 'Ow about the start?"

"I had thought of that. Being deaf, poor thing, Mr. Jones cannot hear the pistol, so I have to stand near him, and he breaks away when I touch him on the back."

"Let's henter 'im for the mile race at the Puddimore sports next week, Perfessor. It'll be a sort of preliminary canter, just to see 'ow 'e works in public. P'raps we can get an odd bet on, too."

"An excellent idea. I leave the details to you."

Thus was Mr. William Jones, the deaf and dumb athlete, launched upon his career. His trainer spent most of his time during the next few days looking up forthcoming athletic meetings both at home and abroad.

"It's like backin' a dead cert, every time," he remarked with joy to the professor. After all, his enthusiasm was not to be wondered at, for Mr. Gannett was the first trainer, in all time, who could send his man to the post, knowing with absolute certainty that he could not be beaten.

The two conspirators got up early every morning and, in the dim twilight, gave Mr. Jones a good five furlongs' sprint, so that they could be sure of handling him neatly in public.

"'E's a marvel," was the verdict of Mr. Gannett, "an' 'e doesn't heven need rubbin' down after the race," he added with a chuckle.

The Puddimore sports were the chief athletic event of the year in the district, and there was always a big crowd there. The professor thought Mr. Jones should go down in a cab, but the trainer, not being quite sure how the mechanical man would get out of the vehicle, insisted that they should walk down to the ground. Mr. Jones, accordingly, strolled along in a heavy overcoat, one of the trainer's arms resting lovingly on his.

"It's a circular track, Perfessor, so you'll 'ave to fix up 'is pacin' accordin'."

"That's very simple. Fortunately it is nearly a perfect circle. In future it would be safer only to run him on the straight, I think."

"We orter 'ave just a little bet on this, Perfessor, for luck. Hif

you'll 'and me a tenner Hi'll get it on, maybe at evens. Hi've one or two friends 'ere 'oo 'll fix that up, but we can't expect more than evens, as nobody knows Mr. Jones's form. 'E's a dark 'orse, an' there's only six in the field."

The mile race was the event of the day. Two of the competitors were well known in the athletic world, and it was generally considered that the result would rest between them, until it leaked out that Jem Gannett had been backing his own man. Jem was regarded as a wily individual, and the experts began to wonder whether he was going to spring a surprise on them with his mysterious Mr. Jones. The odds were shortened, accordingly.

By the time the six starters were lined up Mr. Gannett was in a state of nervous prostration. He had hit the biggest thing of his life, but he felt terribly anxious. Something of his anxiety spread to the usually placid mind of Professor Edicombe.

During all the years of his patient work on Mr. Jones he had merely regarded his creation in a scientific light. It was only when he stood by his automaton's side, awaiting the crack of the pistol, that he realized the full possibilities in front of him. For the first time in his life the professor grew nervous. His fingers twitched. His hand was unsteady even before the pistol went off, and at the critical moment he pulled the lever a couple of notches too far.

Neither Puddimore, nor any other place, had ever seen a race start in such an amazing way.

Mr. William Jones burst away at the rate of over thirty miles an hour.

For a full ten seconds the vast crowd held its breath, spellbound, and then a mighty roar went up. In a few moments Mr. Jones had a clear lead of fifteen to twenty yards. The world had never seen such a runner. He was tearing round the track as fast as a horse could gallop.

"The man must be mad: he can't keep up that pace for a mile," exclaimed the referee in sheer astonishment. But the referee was mistaken, for once in his life. Mr. William Jones tore along like a greyhound, his step never varying. There were two laps to the mile, but the deaf mute had completed the first lap before the rest in the field had got half way round. The crowd yelled in frenzy.

There were only two people in that vast concourse who felt they did not know quite what was going to happen. One was Professor Edicombe and the other was Jem Gannett.

"You've gorn an' done a nice thing," said the trainer lugubriously,

with both eyes glued on the astonishing runner in the distance. "P'raps you'll tell me 'ow you're goin' to explain away this wunnerful performance."

"I'm sure I don't know, Mr. Gannett. I must leave it to you. You're his trainer. Here he comes. He's going a bit fast, so I hope the tape will stop him."

"An' if it don't?"

"Well, you are more athletic than I am, Mr. Gannett. Perhaps you would not mind putting your hand on his chest."

"It's a nice mess anyway. W'en Hi hundertook to train Mr. Jones Hi never bargained for 'avin' to stand in front of a runaway locomotive that's beaten all known and unknown records."

An ear-splitting shout showed that the astonishing runner had won the mile, but the most extraordinary part of the race was that he did not stop at the tape. With his head thrown back, and displaying no sign whatever of fatigue, he shot past and started on his third lap. Mr. Gannett tried to tap him on the chest but the automaton was going at such a rate that he missed him.

"Let him go," shouted hundreds of voices. A man who could run a mile at that speed and then evince no desire to stop was too good a sight to lose.

"I beg of you, Mr. Gannett, think what we had better do," said the professor.

The trainer's brows were puckered.

"It seems to me there's two courses hopen to us," he said. "One is to 'op it, and leave Mr. Jones runnin' till 'is works get rusty. On the other 'and we might let Mr. Jones run a bit longer an' you an' me could go round with the 'at as we've created a bit of astonishment."

"I am getting very afraid of discovery," said the professor nervously. "It would be a serious thing for me."

"An' wot about me? D'you expect I'd be hable to get my livin' hif this got around? 'Ere 'e comes again. Get out of the way. Hi'll 'ave another shot."

But Mr. Gannett's luck was out. Five times Mr. Jones tore round the course, his speed increasing if anything, and every man in the grounds was hoarse with shouting.

At the end of the fifth lap Mr. Gannett was waiting for the runner with a grim face. The affair was getting serious. People were saying the man would drop dead and he ought to be stopped.

The little trainer stood firm as a rock and caught Mr. Jones squarely on the chest with his hand. It was in vain, but the impact

was so great that Jem turned a somersault. The professor ruefully helped him to his feet.

"'Is blessed stoppin' works 'ave gorn wrong," gasped the trainer, and then he stood still with his eyes bulging out of his head. The runner had turned off the circle and was now making a bee-line for the cliffs.

"The shock of your hand has altered one of the levers," exclaimed the professor in a shaky voice. "Mr. Gannett, I fear Mr. Jones is going too near the cliff."

The sports were forgotten, and a vast multitude left the stands to flock after the vanishing figure.

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Mr. Gannett and the professor were sitting together some hours afterwards.

"I cannot express my sorrow in words," said the scientist in broken accents. "Let me look at that evening paper again." Without a word the little trainer handed him the sheet, and the professor read the story once more:

RUNNER GOES MAD.

BEATS ALL RECORDS: TRAGIC SEQUEL.

Puddimore witnessed the eighth wonder of the world to-day. William Jones, a runner hitherto unknown to fame, won the mile race in a marvellous fashion, covering the distance at the rate of 33 miles an hour; and then he continued his astonishing performance by going round and round the track at the same pace.

It had never been conceived that any human being could run at anything like that speed. There is every reason to believe, however, that William Jones achieved the feat in a fit of madness. His trainer tried to stop him several times and after the fifth lap the two had a terrific fight. With Herculean force Jones hurled Mr. Gannett half a dozen yards and made a frantic dash for the open country. It was only too clear by then that the unfortunate athlete had become demented. An enormous crowd ran after him, but he soon out-distanced the fastest runners and headed straight for the cliffs.

Only one man was present at the terrible scene which ended the historic run. He was a farm labourer who happened to be standing there.

"I saw the runner coming at me," he states, "like an express train. He seemed fairly to fly over the ground. I shouted to him to mind the cliff, but he took no notice. There was madness in his eyes as he rushed past, quite close to me.

"He went to the highest part of the cliff, and then with a horrid shriek flung himself right over into the sea, two hundred feet below. He seemed to go on running even while he was falling through space, but when he reached the sea he sank like a log."

At the place where William Jones committed this rash act there is a strong current and it is feared his body will soon be carried miles out to sea.